"THE MURDER AT HILARY COURT," BY EMMA HOWARD WIGHT, NEXT WEEK

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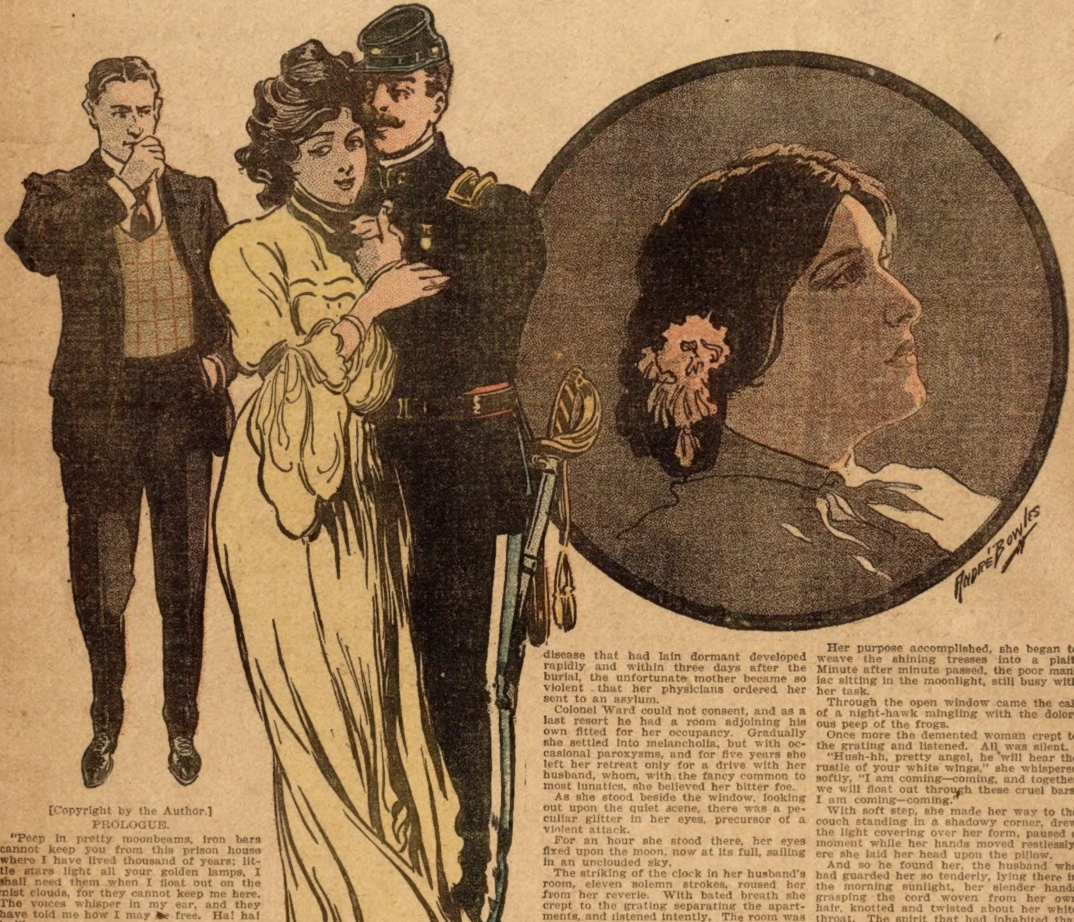
THEIR HAUNTING SECRETS.

By Lydia A. Jocelyn.



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PROLOGUE.

"Peep in pretty moonbeams, iron bars cannot keep you from this prison house where I have lived thousand of years; little stars light all your golden lamps, I shall need them when I float out on the mist clouds, for they cannot keep me here. The voices whisper in my ear, and they have told me how I may be free. Ha! ha! ha!"

A smothered laugh ended the plaint of the woman imprisoned within four walls, the single room that had been her home for five weary years.

The moonbeams fell softly through the casement, open to admit the evening air, and lay in patches upon the oaken floor, but crossed by the shadow of the stout iron grating that held the solitary inmate in the confinement from which she had twice sought escape by suicide.

At forty years of age Ruth Ward retained much of her beauty that had been hers at the age of eighteen, when Colonel Ward, a man twice her age, brought her, a bride to the home of his ancestors.

Her family had carefully concealed the skeleton in the closet of the Strattons, the heredity of insanity, which appeared every second generation, in varied forms, in some cases a slight aberration, or light mania, in other instances the victim became a raving maniac.

Two daughters were born in the first years after her marriage, and three years later a son was given, and their happiness was complete.

Little they guessed that a dark cloud was upon their horizon that would break in fury. The boy, a robust, healthy child, reached the age of ten, and suddenly sickened and died. The second blow fell. The disease that had lain dormant developed rapidly and within three days after the burial, the unfortunate mother became so violent that her physicians ordered her sent to an asylum.

Colonel Ward could not consent, and as a last resort he had a room adjoining his own fitted for her occupancy. Gradually she settled into melancholia, but with occasional paroxysms, and for five years she left her retreat only for a drive with her husband, whom, with the fancy common to most lunatics, she believed her bitter foe.

As she stood beside the window, looking out upon the quiet scene, there was a peculiar glitter in her eyes, precursor of a violent attack.

For an hour she stood there, her eyes fixed upon the moon, now at its full, sailing in an unclouded sky.

The striking of the clock in her husband's room, eleven solemn strokes, roused her from her reverie. With bated breath she crept to the grating separating the apartments, and listened intently. The room was in darkness, the sound of regular breathing told her that her husband slept.

"My enemy slumbers—I will outwit him, and when he comes to gloat over my misery he will find nothing upon which to wreak his vengeance. Ah-h!" she hissed, shaking her clenched fist in the direction from which the breathing proceeded. "He robbed me of the angel God sent me, he took him away and hid him in the cold vault, shutting him in from the light of day. But it comes to me, my angel with pretty white wings, he is calling me——" she continued, her tones tender, her white hands outstretched, "I am coming, wait, wait—only a little while!"

With eager fingers she unbound the coil of hair allowing it to fall in shining waves of jet over the soft gray robe, and began feverishly to pluck strand by strand. Not a sound escaped her lips, although her fingers were stained with crimson from the half-score of wounds upon the delicate scalp.

Her purpose accomplished, she began to weave the shining tresses into a plait. Minute after minute passed, the poor maniac sitting in the moonlight, still busy with her task.

Through the open window came the call of a night-hawk mingling with the dolorous peep of the frogs.

Once more the demented woman crept to the grating and listened. All was silent.

"Hush-hh, pretty angel, he will hear the rustle of your white wings," she whispered softly, "I am coming—coming, and together we will float out through these cruel bars. I am coming—coming."

With soft step, she made her way to the couch standing in a shadowy corner, drew the light covering over her form, paused a moment while her hands moved restlessly, ere she laid her head upon the pillow.

And so he found her, the husband who had guarded her so tenderly, lying there in the morning sunlight, her slender hands grasping the cord woven from her own hair, knotted and twisted about her white throat. The spirit that had inhabited that beautiful clay had floated out into the unknown, the clouded brain was at rest.

CHAPTER I.

THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS.

Eunice and Sophronia Ward, the Colonel's daughters, grew to maidenhood as unlike in form and feature as they were in disposition.

Eunice, the elder, was plain, dumpy, sandy-haired and florid, with a stubborn, jealous, exacting disposition, with a temper hidden beneath a phlegmatic manner.

Sophronia was lovely in face and form, and usually affectionate in disposition, but there was a vein in the strong, bitter bad blood of the Strattons transmitted by the mother, with a goodly share of the pride of the Wards in her temperament, as after events proved.

Eunice was but eighteen and Sophronia two years her junior, when an affair of the heart estranged the sisters as effectually as though death had parted them.

Eunice fell violently in love with handsome Cyril Westwood, a young and penniless nephew of the owner of Edgemere, for whom he labored, early and late. Farmer Westwood, the father of one son, sent his own boy to college, while the labor fell to the lot of Cyril.

The love Eunice had given was unsought, a kind of fierce idolatry, concealed from its object, and unsuspected by the members of her own family.

Cupid, wilful as is the wont of the blind god, had given the heart of the poor farm drudge into the keeping of Sophronia, who loved him in return.

To Eunice the young sister confided her secret, little divining that while Eunice received the confidence so calmly, the fires of jealous wrath were smouldering in her heart.

Colonel Ward was proud of his daughters, proud of his wealth, proud of his ancestral home and broad acres, because they were his, and he had already decided upon a suitable match for each of his daughters. This, both Eunice and Sophronia knew.

"I am sure father will never give his consent for you to throw yourself away upon Cyril Westwood. You know very well that he has decided you must marry Gard Norman, and he will be furious," Eunice answered, in a hard, metallic voice, a slow smile creeping over her lips.

"I know all that, but I think we might persuade him to change his mind, especially if you will intercede for us—won't you Eunice?"

Eunice remained silent.

"When he knows how much my heart is set upon Cyril and he knows how much Cyril loves me, he will surely forgive us. If I lose my love I shall be miserable, and perhaps——"

"I intercede? Pshaw! You know that I am fated to marry Ben Gilmore, and I shall not object."

"That is very different, you love Ben—or at least you don't love anybody else. Now I love Cyril, and I do not love Gardner Norman."

Eunice turned a shade paler as she replied.

"If you dare to marry that poor farm drudge you will be cast off. You can take your choice, of course. 'Marry in haste and repent at leisure.'"

"And I shall marry him, even if I am turned out of doors!" flashed Sophronia with true Ward spirit.

"I shall feel in duty bound to tell father of your extraordinary conduct, miss!" exclaimed Eunice, "we shall see whether you will dare to marry without father's consent!"

"Cyril will save you the trouble. He is coming to ask father's consent this very night."

Unable to control her anger and jealousy, Eunice left the room, locking herself in her own chamber.

In the evening Cyril Westwood asked the consent of the Colonel and was forbidden ever again to enter the door.

Only the tossing branches of the trees above her head and the golden stars witnessed her agony and bitter tears as Eunice strode backward and forward in the dim paths of the Ward woods, battling with her fierce love as best she might, and breathing a vow of vengeance against the sister who had, though unwittingly, robbed her of her love.

When she returned to the house her manner was so cold and calm that none suspected that volcano of passionate anger and hate was smouldering in her breast.

Three days later Sophronia Ward fled from her home and became Cyril Westwood's wife. The young couple were employed at the Edgemere farm, Cyril still as drudge upon the farm, Sophronia as kitchen maid in place of the buxom young woman who had married and gone away to a home of her own.

Colonel Ward executed a will bequeathing his entire estate to Eunice, and her heirs, on condition that she married Benjamin Gilmore, but a codicil was added providing that the landed property could not be sold. In case Eunice died without leaving heirs, the estate should revert back to Sophronia or her heirs. Should both daughters die without issue the estate became the property of the town, to be used for the support of widows and orphans.

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But the young couple did not long remain in their menial position. Farmer Westwood died, very suddenly, from a shock consequent upon the news of the death of his son, and Cyril was his sole surviving heir. The young husband did not long mar the peace of his wife's relatives. In less than five years from the date of his marriage, Sophronia was left a widow, with a wee baby girl of scarcely two weeks, whom she had named Lucy.

A fatality appeared to attend the family, for the following year she was called to her father's death-bed. He had been seized with paralysis, and was unable to speak, or even move his limbs, but his eyes turned so piteously in the direction of his discarded daughter's portrait, that a compassionate neighbor, guessing his wishes sent a message to Edgemere.

Eunice, who had wedded Benjamin Gilmore, was also a widow, and resided at the Ward homestead with her little Aggie, a child of four years, who had been born during the first year of her marriage.

She guessed that her fatner wished to change his will and leave a portion to his youngest daughter, and she refused to understand his appealing glances in the direction of the hated sister's portrait, which she never allowed to be removed.

But fate played into her hands. She was safe. Colonel Ward would never again hold a pen in his nerveless fingers.

She knew nothing of the summons to Sophronia Westwood, and was nearly beside herself with rage when Sophronia entered the sick room, with little Lucy, an infant of three months, in her arms.

The neighbor had considerately withdrawn, and the dying man was alone with his children and the wee grandchildren. Sophronia bent over him, and pressed her lips to his own.

He returned the caress fondly, and strove to speak, but all in vain.

"Sophronia Westwood, why are you here?" hissed Mrs. Gilmore, "I did not send for you, neither did my father desire your presence, and it is an unwarrantable intrusion upon a dying man. Begone! Never let me see your face here again in the home you have disgraced!"

"My father kissed me," sobbed Sophronia, as she clung to the hand lying upon the counterpane, without power of motion, "Father, Father! Speak to me once again, tell me that I am forgiven, that you love me still!"

The old man made a desperate but ineffectual effort to speak, but he could only gaze upon the faces of his children with a longing look, as if he would fain undo the wrong to his youngest, best-loved child.

"Don't you see that your presence disturbs him?" exclaimed Eunice, in a tone of such concentrated hatred that her sister opened her black eyes in astonishment.

"I know why you have come. You would cheat my daughter of her inheritance, you who have already wronged me beyond forgiveness, and now you would take from me my hard-earned wealth! Was it not enough that you robbed me of the only man I ever loved, and compelled me to marry a man whom I detested and despised, that I might gain what you had thrown away for love?"

"Eunice! Sister, what are you talking of? You married the man of your choice, with our father's sanction. Surely I never robbed you in any way!" whispered Sophronia in a bewildered sort of way.

"Don't call me Eunice—don't dare to call me sister," foamed the angry woman. "Oh, you needn't stare at me in that idiotic manner. I loved Cyril Westwood better than my life—better than you were ever capable of loving. Your baby face won him—you married him, while I hid my crushed heart! I secured the money——"

A cry from Sophronia interrupted her heartless speech. She turned toward the couch. Colonel Ward lay a corpse before them.

The money that Eunice Gilmore had schemed for was hers beyond a doubt.

After the funeral Sophronia was forbidden to cross the threshold of her childhood home, and she returned to the farmhouse leaving Mrs. Gilmore to the enjoyment of the estate.

Years passed, and the sisters, though living within the same town, had rarely met, and had never exchanged a word. Sophronia, once so tender and loving, grew hard and stern as the months rolled by and the children, Agnes and Lucy, grew to womanhood.

Eunice Gilmore was not to go unpunished, and her own fierce nature brought about the retribution she deserved.

She thwarted her child in her love for a man every way worthy, yet Mrs. Gilmore had driven Grant Judson from her door with bitter, insulting words. Agnes, who feared rather than loved her mother, was compelled to write a note, bidding her lover to forget her.

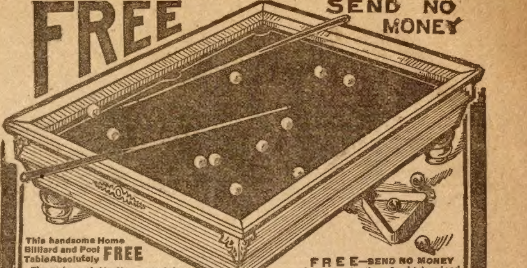
From her window she watched her lover while he read the cruel letter, hoping that he would refuse to accpet it, but without a word he strode away. Two days later he had left his home, and none knew whither he had gone. Eunice Gilmore had accomplished her object, she had separated the lovers, but at a fearful cost.

She had sown the wind—she reaped the whirlwind. Her daughter's fine intellect was a wreck. The curse had fallen. The affliction stung her proud nature in more ways than in her affection. By the terms of her father's will, should Agnes die without issue, the estate must revert back to Sophronia's daughter, pretty Lucy Westwood.

CHAPTER II.

THE KIRBYS OF HILLTOP.

Kirby's mill had fallen into decay. The once busy wheels were still, the oaken door of the gristmill hung by a single rusty hinges. Half the roof had fallen in, bats made a home among the crazy rafters, barn swallows darted in and out through broken windows, their wings glittering in purple as they flitted across the level ropes of sunlight filtering through chinks and crannies, or perched upon the cross-beam above the broken-toothed saw, for the partition separating the sawmill from the gristmill had long since fallen away in great gaps. The log carriage, chipped and battered, still remained, and the sawdust from the last logs that had rested upon the heavy frame lay in mildewed heaps in the pit below.



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The ruin stood upon a patch of ground encircled by two roads. The turnpike crossed the outlet of the mill-pond above the mill by a substantial bridge shadowed by a clump of giant willows, and a road branching to the left, plunged down a steep hill, crossed the mill-stream by a second bridge, and joined the highway at a point some twenty yards below the ruin.

Fifteen feet beneath this narrow bridge the waters swirled between rocky jaws, and foamed against a granite wall rising perpendicularly from the bed of the stream, on the left bank, and upon the very verge of the rough ledge, a dwelling was perched, its rear walls in a straight line with the face of the foundation upon which it was built, the windows overlooking the foaming waters.

A giant maple had found a foothold in the narrow shelf on a level with the bed of the stream, its trunk standing out at a slight angle from the rocky wall, its tough roots striking deep beneath the dwelling, and coiling upward at some points, forced their way through the natural wall to the cellar.

Millrock Cottage was upon the site of a structure that had been reared prior to the Revolution, but only a few of the oaken timbers of the ancient building remained in the modernized habitation, and here dwelt the Aldens.

A thick hedge was the dividing line between the flower garden in front and the base of the steep knoll, that was crowned by the oldest dwelling in Mapledale village.

Hilltop had been the inheritance of the Kirbys' for generations, the owners of the ancient mill.

The quaint structure was a mass of angles and incongruities, with pointed gables, twisted chimneys, and deep-set windows staring out from odd corners, and with low-browed doors screened by masses of ivy and woodbine, but a pleasing whole.

The winds and storms of centuries had ridden through the knotted arms of the maples lining the lawn from the crown of the hill to its base.

The east wing, a portion of the building seldom used by the family, bore the reputation of being haunted.

Time was when the Kirbys had been the owners of the land far and near, but the fortunes of the last generation had waned and acre by acre had been disposed of until only a moderate sized farm remained, but the family pride clung like a garment.

The owner of the estate was a widow, the mother of an only son, the last of his line.

Her husband, familiarily called "Father Kirby," had been social and kindly. The silver-haired man had been beloved by his neighbors, but this regard had not been shared by Mrs. Kirby.

The junior of her husband by twenty-five years, and his second wife, her manners were not calculated to win the esteem accorded him, and she incurred the positive dislike of many.

The older inhabitants of Mapledale remembered her as she was when Donald Kirby, then past fifty years of age, brought her to Hilltop, a fair bride. That was thirty years agone, and the young wife, delighting in all bright and beautiful adornments, had worn her blond hair in ringlets, decked her person in laces and ribbons, and actually wore two rings and a broach, an innovation of the customs of the church of which her husband was a steward, and the offender was subjected to a solemn lecture upon the "pomps and vanities."

Upon the birth of her son, ten years after her marriage, Mrs. Kirby became again the theme of gossip, on account of her sudden change of deportment and habits.

She assumed an air of humility in contrast to her former proud indifference to the opinions of the church members and neighbors.

Pride, she certainly displayed, but of a singular quality.

She attired herself in Quakerish garb, her garments were of the plainest fashion, the colors, drab, gray or black. She led the religious meetings, striving to gain the title that had been borne by Father Kirby's first wife—"a mother in Israel."

When Mark Kirby was but fifteen years of age, the gray-haired husband died, leaving a will in which he devised his entire estate to his beloved wife, Jane, subject to her undisputed control.

Her son Mark, with every facility for acquiring knowledge, was, in the parlance of the villagers, "dull as a hoe."

He had the reputation of being cruel, but, in spite of his low proclivities, he was his mother's idol.

Why this slow-brained youth was so much petted was a mystery that only fond mothers might solve, but to have insinuated that her darling was lacking in brilliance would have given the lady mortal offense.

That Mark was crafty, and possessed of a low cunning was evident in his daily habits.

With her neighbors at Millrock Cottage, Mrs. Kirby was on good terms.

"I don't see how the Aldens can get on with the Widow Kirby," commented Mrs. Westwood, who still dwelt at Edgemere, the farm adjoining the Kirbys', "but Mrs. Alden is such a quiet body, with such a mild, even disposition that neither Widow Kirby nor that good-for-nothing Mark can pick a fuss with her. There's Fannie and Charlena, just like the mother, and as to Aunt Huldah, she's too busy in predicting what is going to happen and looking for trouble, that she hain't got no time to quarrel. If Cyrus Alden was always at home there would be war in the camp, for he's got a temper that ain't to be trifled with."

Mrs. Alden had been in delicate health for years, and Aunt Huldah Dobson was the housekeeper at Millrock Cottage.

Cyrus Alden, the superintendent of a manufacturing establishment in the city, eighteen miles distant, was absorbed in business, and it was often that he remained absent from his family for a month at a time, and neither his wife nor daughters cared to rouse his ire by any allusion to the many annoyances they suffered through Mark Kirby's numerous vexatious acts.

Although Mark and his mother were the only members of the family, the household was by no means diminutive.

The wealthy widow, Eunice Gilmore, and her daughter, had taken up their abode at Hilltop.

The daughter, Agnes, though beautiful, was insane, but Mrs. Kirby was pleased to increase her income by an addition to the family circle, for Eunice Gilmore paid liberally for the asylum offered by her old schoolmate. Besides, Mrs. Kirby had formed a plan which will be unfolded as our story progresses.

Aunt Sally Higgins, a spinster, sour and cranky, was the housekeeper, and she was ably assisted by a buxom lass, Ellen Shore, who had been in the employ of the Kirbys for three years. The remaining help was old Heck, formerly a Virginia plantation hand, who had been a chattel of Father Kirby's brother, had been manumitted and sent to the New England home of his master. Uncle Heck made himself very useful in doing the chores, milking the cows and performing a labor disdained by the indolent Mark.

CHAPTER III.

REBECCA AT THE WELL.

"Good gracious, Fannie! Who can that be?"

Lucy Westwood dropped the crank of the windlass at the old well beneath the woodshed, and stared at the tall figure halting in front of the gate, splashing her apron with the water from the pitcher she deposited so hastily beside the curb.

Fannie Alden glanced over her shoulder,

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and turned her face toward her friend.

"Don't stare so, Lu, it's a soldier, of course. One can see that by his uniform. I've no idea who it can be. Don't let him see that we are noticing; he will think us rude."

The stranger halted for a moment, as if tempted to turn in at the gate, but finally walked away at a swinging pace, leaving the young ladies in a most delightful maze of conjecture as to whom he might be.

"He's handsome, almost as fine as Dick Norman," commented Lucy, as the stranger disappeared beyond the high knoll down the road. "I wonder where he is going. Maybe to Widow Kirby's."

"I am sure I cannot guess. I hope it is not a case of love at first sight, Lu; Dick would be jealous," laughed Fannie.

"Dick would never be jealous of me," returned Lucy, positively, "but that young officer is handsome, though, you can't deny that."

"Fine looking, as nearly as I could tell at the distance and with the glimpse I had of his face," answered Fannie, indifferently.

"Well, I took a good look at him. I think he had black eyes, and I'm sure he has a lovely mustache, and so tall and martial—that's the proper word, isn't it? All the same, I wouldn't swap Dick Norman for all the soldiers in the world. I love him too well, and I do wish mother and Deacon Norman wouldn't be so set against us. Some day I'll elope with Dick, as sure as my name is Lucy Westwood. Oh, my! there's Blind Harris, the peepstone man, and he's coming here. I'm glad mother is out visiting, for we will have our fortunes told. I'll get him a cup of tea and a bite of cold meat and bread."

A stooping flugre had turned in at the gate after groping for a moment, with an uncertain touch for the latch, and came slowly up the path, swinging a knotted cane from side to side as the blind are wont to do.

He was a spare, old man, whose pale, cadaverous face denoted ill health or frequent fasting—perhaps both.

Blind Harris was a familiar figure in the village, where he paid semi-annual visits, in his rounds through the country towns, picking up a precarious support by fortune telling.

Marvelous tales of his power of second-sight were rife in Mapledale, for the good people of the quiet New England village were somewhat given to superstition.

The young people tried charms and had their fortunes told, while their elders believed in signs and omens.

A few averred that Blind Harris had money stored, and that his occupation was profitable, but that was mere conjecture.

He was certainly a very inoffensive old man, and with his thin silvery hair falling over his shoulders, his mild, blue eyes wearing the dreamy, hazy look peculiar to the blind, his pale, intellectual face, his thin, white hands, and the black, seedy coat that was part and parcel of the man, he looked far more like a superannuated minister than a professional fortune teller.

"Sarvant, little girls, I hope I see you well," piped a quavering voice in response to their greeting, and both girls smiled at the mode of address from a blind man.

"Come in, Uncle Harris, and I will give you a cup of tea, and a piece of apple pie and cheese, and there's a plate of strawberries. After you have had a lunch you shall tell our fortunes," coaxed Lucy.

"It has been a pretty warm day for June, and it is tiresome plodding along the road, up and down hill. I don't care if I do have something to stay my stomach," responded the old man, as he followed the girls to the low-ceiled room that was so delightfully cool after the long tramp. The white dimity curtains floated out through the open casement, the wide-throated chimney was filled with asparagus boughs intermingled with a red glow of peonies ranged in a mammoth pitcher planted quite in the center of the green, feathery foliage.

From among the six straight-backed, spindle-legged chairs, Lucy drew a motherly arm-chair, that reminded one of the plethoric parent of six weazoned old maids, and the old man sank back within its soft arms with a sigh of relief, while Fannie placed his hat upon the mahogany table with its folding leaves nearly reaching the floor.

His eyes wandered with their unseeing gaze to the wide fireplace, the andirons, and shovel and tongs, each surmounted by a lion's head of highly polished brass, and then to the mantel with its two candlesticks of the same metal, with the snuffer-tray resting between them as if to keep the peace, and then his sightless eyes were turned toward an allegorical picture, representing the "Seven Ages of Man," from the cradle to the grave, suspended above the tall locker.

"Here's a cup of tea, Uncle Harris. I put some chips in the cooking stove and made it fresh, and there's pie and cheese, and pickles and doughnuts. Would you like some cold baked beans?"

"No, child, it is near sundown, I guess. I hear the cowbells, and I don't care for meat victuals at supper."

The girls sat by while the old man drank his tea and munched the pie and cheese, pickles and doughnuts, and when the meal was finished Lucy cleared the table with deft hands, and returned to the sitting-room.

"Now, we are ready, we want our fortunes told, and we don't want one single thing left out," she chirped, her black eyes wide open with expectancy.

"Uncle Harris will tell it like a book, and I hope it will be a good fortune," piped the thin voice.

"And Fannie's, too," began Lucy.

"I don't care to have my fortune told," broke in Fannie. "It might be bad, and then I shouldn't want to know it."

"Fudge!" laughed Lucy. "I'm not afraid, and I want to know just what is going to happen. You must give each of us a good husband."

CHAPTER IV.

RAISING THE VEIL OF THE FUTURE.

"Please get the peepstone, Uncle, and tell Lucy her fortune. It is getting late and I must be going home soon," urged Fannie.

Thus adjured, the old man drew from the recesses of a capacious pocket, a crystal of oval form.

"Hold this in both hands, while you wish that your future may be pictured in the stone."

The crystal was clear, not a trace of color or a line marred the smooth surface as Lucy pressed it between her pink palms.

"Now, wish," spoke the old man in a serious tone.

When the seer took the crystal from her hands it had assumed a clouded appearance, and he grasped it in his fingers, his thin face growing strangely pallid.

"The stars presage for you, two husbands——"

"Oh, no, I don't want to be a widow," broke in Lucy, her eyes fixed intently on the old man's face. "I think it is dreadful!"

"I see trouble in the near future, for the husband you choose will not be the choice of your friends."

"That's true," commented Lucy, but the seer took no note of her interruption.

"I see a night of storm; I see a dark lake, and a black building upon its margin, all revealed by the lightning glare—an uncanny scene for a bridal. I see you standing in sombre attire, amid grime and dust; your bridegroom clasps your hand—the minister wears hat and cloak. The scene changes and you are before me in widow's weeds.

"Again you appear before me. Alas! the doom of your maternal ancestors has overtaken you."

The seer paused, his face grew pale, his voice was choked when he spoke again, painfully, as if the words came without his will.

"Then comes the vision of a crowded courtroom. The judge sits in his seat, leaning forward as if to catch each word,—twelve jurors listen with bated breath while the advocate pleads for the life of a wretched woman, sitting there, cowering before those stern men who must pronounce the words that may condemn her to a shameful death.

"Her face is hidden in her shaking hands, she shivers and trembles weakly. The advocate takes his seat, the judge rises and delivers the charge, the gathering shadows of a wintry evening creep through the windows and the lamps are lighted, flickering fitfully in the gloom. I see the great clock as it ticks away the seconds that seem like an eternity. I see the twelve men glide away like ghosts. Again the prisoner is visible; I can see her but dimly, but through the haze a gallows looms up in the background—I cannot see her face—I can see no more."

The seer drew a long, sighing breath, and opened his eyes, while the color came slowly back to his face.

"What a dreadful fortune!" gasped Lucy. "You see me at the altar, you see me in widow's weeds, but who is the wretched creature in the courtroom—in the cell?"

"I could not see her face. I saw only the streaming black hair, the trembling form," returned the old man. "I only felt that her reason fled—I——"

"It must be Cousin Aggie; she is insane. Mark Kirby torments her, and she may commit some terrible crime—oh, I hope not! It is dreadful."

Lucy's voice was a whisper.

"It must be poor Aggie," returned Fannie. "Mrs. Kirby tells mamma that she has violent attacks, and that some day she may commit some dreadful crime. I think your Aunt Gilmore should have her placed in an asylum where she would be safe. She is rich enough to have the poor girl well taken care of."

"If you had not given me two husbands I should think that it was me you saw in the cell, but then I couldn't have had the second husband, you know," reasoned Lucy, self-convincing.

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"My sightless eyes have never looked upon your face, but in my vision I saw it, a coronet of jetty hair, a pair of roguish black eyes, dimpled chin, cherry lips and a rounded figure—is the picture correct?"

"Quite," returned Fannie, "and the woman you saw in—in the cell?"

"Was thin, with long black hair streaming over her shoulders. The face was hidden."

"It must be poor Aggie. She is pale and thin—I pity her so much, although we have never been allowed to acknowledge that we are cousins. And Mrs. Gilmore, although she is mamma's own sister, boasts that if Sophronia Westwood were dead she would not attend the funeral. They have not spoken together since the day Grandpa Ward died."

Without noticing the remark, the seer turned to Fannie.

"Now, shall I tell you of your fortune?"

"I don't think I care to have my fortune told—but here is a quarter," stammered Fannie.

"It is not your money, child, but something impels me to speak. I must read your destiny."

She received the crystal mechanically.

When the seer took it from her hands it was clouded with faint lines and figures, floating over the surface like the rainbow tints of a soap-bubble.

"Can you see me, now?" she questioned, half doubtingly. "Tell me how I look."

"Tall, graceful, slender, with floating brown curls, and eyes blue as violets, complexion fair as the lining of a sea-shell——"

"You flatter me," smiled Fannie. "But I am rather-tall, and I have blue eyes and brown hair."

"You have described her exactly," broke in Lucy. "She is a beauty,—everybody in the village will tell you that; she has white teeth, although her mouth is rather large, and she has dimples in her cheeks."

"Hush, Lu," remonstrated Fannie. "How can Uncle Harris tell my fortune, if you interrupt him?"

"You have had suitors for whom you cared nothing, but close upon the present, I see two lovers, one slender, fair-haired, but a rival is at hand. For the time, the scales are evenly balanced. They turn, and the blond lover is discarded for the husband appointed you by fate is tall and dark.

"I see his future, blending with your own fortune, growing rapidly. I see him in a soldier's garb, beside a swiftly-flowing stream. Near at hand a campfire is burning. From a thicket a score of sinister faces peer out, savages lurking in the whispering sedges.

"I behold a second figure, beside the stream, a soldier, heedless of the danger. He throws up his hands, stumbles forward and is buried beneath the water. I see him no more—the camp is faded from my view."

"Ha! Ha! you have dealt so largely in horrors that it is quite time you should harp on a different string. Your latest prediction is to say the least, extremely improbable—in fact, as unreliable as the remainder of your mummery. Beg pardon, ladies, I called to get a glass of water, but as you were so agreeably entertained I have waited, not caring to interrupt your pastime. I assure you I had not intention of playing eavesdropper."

A fair-haired young man was standing just within the kitchen. He had verified the adage that "listeners never hear good of themselves" for he had paid assiduous court to pretty Fannie Alden for at least six months, and the mention of a rival galled him.

"Lacy Lisle, aren't you ashamed of yourself?" pouted Fannie. "We are having our fortunes told just for the fun of the thing; come in while Uncle Harris tells you what is going to happen."

"Excuse me," laughed Doctor Lisle, "I will sit in the kitchen until the curtain falls."

He spoke lightly, but there was a cloud upon his brow. Did he give credence to the prediction concerning those two light-hearted maidens whose lives had been passed in the quiet country village, where scarce a ripple from the outside world of fashion ever disturbed the monotony?

CHAPTER V.

A YOUNG NERO.

Down the sandy road a half-score of sedate cows came shambling, each halting just in front of the farmhouse gate to snatch a tender wisp of grass from between the tufts of "Bouncing Bets;" then the loud call of the farmer's boy, driving his flock homeward at milking time, sent the loiterer into a lurching trot, causing the bell to tinkle merrily, while Lucy's favorite white, curly-haired dog joined in the race, as the herd fled away up the side of the knoll, while Prince, having discharged what he considered his duty in driving the trespassers from the premises, returned demurely to his post on the front doorstep.

In after days Doctor Lisle would remember the scene, the violet haze in the distant line of woods, the level beams of the sun slipping behind the western hills, the stretch of maple-shaded road, and the drowsy tinkle of the bell.

The drooping willows and the tasselled alders were pencling lengthened patches across the glassy waters of the millpond, as Fannie and her escort halted abruptly upon the crest of the hill, just outside the upper gate of the Hilltop lawn.

Just within the paling a broad-shouldered, thick-set young Nero was bending over a water spaniel, crouching at his feet and writhing under the lash.

"I'll teach you to fetch and carry when I bid you!" yelled the brute.

"Mark Kirby, you are a wretch!" called Fannie. "How dare you? You are too cruel to live!"

But Mark took no heed. Again and again the sharp lash hissed.

The cries of the tortured animal were almost human.

In an instant Fannie was kneeling over the helpless creature, and shielding it with her arms.

"Don't you think you had better stay there for the rest of your life, Fan Alden? I can finish the job when you get tired o' curling over the pup. Don't you wish you could get hold o' this whip and let Rollo off?" mocked Mark.

"Give me that whip!"

Doctor Lisle stood beside the offender and stretched out a slender, velvet-smooth hand.

"Not if I know myself," replied Mark.

Lisle measured the form of the stalwart young wretch, and hesitated, for he realized that his strength was scarcely sufficient.

"Doctor Lisle, do help poor Rollo!" pleaded Fannie, tearfully, but Mark's strong fingers tightened their grip upon the butt of the whip.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Who will help poor Rollo?" pleaded Fannie, in a distressed voice.

"I will!"

A strong, bronzed hand grasped Mark's collar, while its mate wrenched the whip from his grasp.

It was the work of an instant, and Fannie looked up through tears, to thank—not Lacy Lisle, but the tall soldier who had been the subject of conversation and speculation at Edgemere farmhouse.

An awkward paused followed, that was broken by Mark.

"I'll make you sup sorrow for trespassing! Get out o' this or I'll put you out!"

"Wouldn't it be as well to call for assistance before you eject me by force?" questioned the soldier, a half smile dawning under his silky, black mustache.

"I'll—I'll——"

"You'll what?" bantered the soldier.

"I'll have you arrested for assault, and—I'll show what else I'll do!" yelled Mark, as he sprang back, grasped a sickle hanging upon the limb of a crab apple tree and made a furious slash.

But the stranger was not taken off his guard, and sprang lightly aside.

The next instant the dangerous weapon was twisted from his hand by a dexterous turn of the wrist, and Mark measured his length upon the greensward.

"I hardly imagined I should have occasion for sword practice in this quiet neighborhood," laughed the soldier, his black eyes

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losing their stern expression as he turned to Fannie, who stood beside Doctor Lisle.

"Mark! Mark! What is the matter?"

The shrill call came from the doorway. Mrs. Kirby, hearing the altercation, hastened to the scene.

"Oh, mercy, what is the matter?" she called again.

Mark scrambled to his feet.

"I was punishing Rollo for not minding me, and that fellow pitched in—that's all. It was none o' his business anyway!"

"Do you know that this is private property that you are trespassing?" inquired the widow, with an assumption of dignity.

"Perfectly, madam," returned the soldier, "but under the circumstances, I think I am justified in my intrusion. This young vil—fellow—your son, I presume, was abusing the animal in a most wanton and cruel manner. The young lady called for help, and I took the whip from the ras—your son's hand, whereupon he made a slash at me with a sickle. I thought proper to knock him down. That is the case in a nutshell."

"Mark is a kind-hearted boy—er—er—er—but he is hasty when he gets provoked. He has been teaching Rollo tricks. I suppose the dog was contrary, and Mark thought proper to chastise him. He is very fond of Rollo, and I must say I consider this a most unwarranted intrusion," returned Mrs. Kirby.

"Mark is wicked!" broke in Fannie, vehemently. "He does everything cruel from torturing flies to tormenting and abusing children. You forget the poor little beggar girl. When he offered her a stick of candy and she held out her hand, he put his lighted cigar stump in her hand and closed her fingers, holding her hand till she screamed with pain. You saw him do that. How can you say he is kind-hearted?"

"That was when Mark was only a child," began Mrs. Kirby.

"He was sixteen; that was only four years ago," answered Fannie.

"Boys will be boys, and one cannot expect them to be always discriminating. Mark is no worse than others," returned Mrs. Kirby, in a purring tone, her eyelids drooping over her pale blue eyes, so like Mark's own.

"I'll have my revenge for this, as sure as my name is Mark Kirby," vociferated Mark.

"My fine fellow, if you wish for further settlement you can have it now, or defer it until you hav quite recovered from your present punishment. For four weeks you can find me at my mother's residence, 'The Pines'—on the west road, you know. Here is my card."

Mark took the bit of pasteboard and read the inscription:

"HAROLD STANDISH,
Co. C. 2nd Cavalry,
U. S. A."

CHAPTER VI.

AUNT HULDAH.

"So, that is the Widow Standish's son; he's a captain; I saw his epaulets. What brought him here? I mistrust I'd better keep shady," muttered Mark, reflectively, "but I'll have it out o' him some way."

The young captain halted outside the lower gate.

"Can you tell me where Mrs. Huldah Dobson lives?" he asked, politely, as the couple came up.

"Aunt Huldah is our housekeeper, she is right here," returned Fannie.

"Then, with your permission I will stop awhile. Aunt Huldah was my nurse in infancy, and will feel slighted if I do not visit her," returned Standish.

"Indeed she would—I suppose you are Harold Standish, her 'soldier boy,' as she is fond of calling you. She speaks of you very often, but she supposses you are away out West, somewhere."

Doctor Lisle frowned, and colored to the roots of his hair,—curling hair, and Fannie saw the glint in his turquoise blue eyes, but she cared little for his displeasure, and continued:

"You have made a mortal enemy of Mark Kirby; he is too revengeful to forget. I fear he will make poor Rollo suffer terribly. He has a good amount of the Indian in his nature without any of the noble traits of the savage."

"A few months residence on the border would put all ideas of the nobility of poor 'Lo' out of his mind," laughed the captain.

"I suppose you know a great deal about the savages, don't you?"

"I really should, as I have been stationed at a frontier fort for months, and have seen some hard service," returned the captain.

As the trio entered the gate at Millrock Cottage, Aunt Huldah appeared upon the threshold.

"Land o' Goshen!" she called, in a joyful tone, "if here ain't my soldier boy. I'm tickled nigh about to death ter see you, I was worryin' for fear you'd get killed away amongst them 'ere Injuns. Where on airth did you come from?"

"From my mother's, just now. Am on a month's furlough. Came from Fort Leavenworth, where our regiment is stationed; arrived Wednesday evening," replied the captain, as he grasped Aunt Huldah's extended hand, bent his head and pressed a kiss upon her apple-red cheek.

"Land sakes! I hadn't thought o' interducin' you," exclaimed Aunt Huldah.

"Captain Standish, shall I make you acquainted with Miss Fannie Alden? Captain Standish, Doctor Lisle."

"We have made a partial acquaintance, already, auntie," chimed in Fannie. "Come in Captain Standish; come in doctor."

"Walk right in," supplemented Aunt Huldah.

Aunt Huldah accompanied the trio to the sittingroom, where Mrs. Alden welcomed her guests, cordially.

Fannie bore a striking resemblance to the mother, the same violet blue eyes, the same wealth of bronze-brown hair, the mother's wound in a coronet of broad braids, the daughter's falling in a shower of ringlets.

Aunt Huldah dropped into a chair beside the door, and rubbed her pudgy hands together, softly.

"I was a-dreamin' o' you, Harold; on'y last night—a-dreamin' that you had come hum an' was jest a-goin' tew be married to Fannie here. Dreams go exactly opposite, you know, tew dream of a weddin' is sure sign of misfortin.'

Fannie's fair cheek crimsoned, as she met the admiring glance from the captain's expressive eyes.

"Where is Charlie?" she asked, to divert the current of Aunt Huldah's remarks.

"Charlie's out in the meadow pickin' dandelions for tomorrow's dinner—dandelions are good greens and healthy, tew. Dear me, that puts me in mind that I'd better be gittin' tea on. I am so flustered seein' Harold that I e'en-a-most forgot that folks is hungry. We can talk after supper on a full stomach, and I'll leave you tew entertain yourselves."

Harold spent a very pleasant half-hour, chatting with the ladies and Doctor Lisle.

"Charlie has got home and has got a master lot o' dandelions," announced Aunt Huldah, putting her face in at the door. "Come right out, tea is ready."

Harold had expected to be introduced to a tall young gentleman, brother of Fannie. He nearly betrayed his surprise when Fannie introduced a slender, graceful maiden, a decided brunette, with regular features, a profusion of glossy black hair, worn in braids coiled low in the neck, and bidding fair to become a beauty, as "My sister, Charlie."

From the shadow of long black lashes, the gray-blue eyes looked out placidly, but the young captain detected an occasional flash that argued well for a strength of character that was her birthright from the father she so strongly resembled.

Harold found himself so much interested that it was no task for Aunt Huldah to persuade him to remain over night at the cottage.

CHAPTER VII.

SIGNS AND OMENS.

The captain returned to the sittingroom, to the secret annoyance of Doctor Lisle, who mentally voted him a bore, wondering why the jackanapes did not devote himself to Charlie, when he should have the sense to perceive that the fascinating Lacy Lisle was paying strict attention to Fannie.

Captain Standish related some amusing stories of life in a frontier fort, touching lightly upon descriptions of a battle in which he had been engaged.

"I don't believe he ever saw a real Sioux warrior, let alone fighting them," remarked the doctor to Charlena, in an undertone.

Charlie was in a humor to tease. She had discovered that he was jealous of the stalwart young captain, and was mischievously bent. Accordingly she took up the cudgels in Harold's defense.

"Oh, yes, indeed, he has! I have a slight acquaintance with his mother. She purchased the mansion over on the west road, 'The Pines,' as it is called. She lives there, and one day Fan and I were out riding, and we stopped, just to get a glass of water. It was awfully warm, so she invited us to stop for a rest. She is just the nicest old lady. She told us her son was at Leavenworth. He had been on a campaign, and was in the dreadful battle with the Sioux. We read of it in the paper, at the time—don't you remember about it? He is with General Harney, you know. He is just the beau-ideal of a soldier, and such splendid black eyes and mustache, so tall and—and martial," declared Charlie, by way of pinning the argument, and having planted her small arrow, she pursed her rosy lips very positively.

"The captain's epaulets and uniform take your fancy, as a little girl, but I should imagine a young lady like your sister Fannie would not be so easily caught with chaff," retorted Lisle, for Charlie considered herself as quite a young lady. The doctor knew the weak point in her armor, and understanding that she was quizzing him, delivered this return shot, fully succeeding in making a firm ally for the captain, and a tormentor for himself, for Charlie was keen of wit and fully able to cope with her adversary.

"No, indeed! It is the man, not the epaulets—he doesn't need a diploma,—I mean a commission, to prove to people that he is a somebody. You know lots of people have to do that."

Doctor Lisle reddened, and his rather thin lips shut closely.

"There, now, I must go and help Aunt Huldah in the kitchen," continued Charlie. "It is Fan's turn to wipe the dishes, but I do hate to disturb her. I can hear the captain's story another time," and with this Parthian arrow, Charlie hurried to the kitchen, where she found Aunt Huldah busily engaged in clearing the table.

Presently Fannie appeared.

"I came to help Aunt Huldah, Fan, why didn't you stay and entertain the company?" asked Charlie.

"Aunt Huldah is tired enough. I'll wash the dishes and you wipe them," returned Fannie. "Mamma can entertain them for a time, I'm sure. Just sit right down in that chair and rest, auntie."

"Wa-a-al, gals, I don't care if I dew. I be kind o' tired, and flustrated with Harold a-comin' so suddint. I'll set here and oversee you. I ain't quite so young as I used to be. I dropped my dishcloth three times today, and says I to myself, 'there'll be three come before the day's out.' "

"It's funny you believe in so many signs, auntie," laughed Charlie. "You have a sign for everything, and believe in dreams. I should think you would be frightened to death."

"It don't make a grain o' difference, not a grain, I don't s'pose, whether a-body believes or not. Signs come true. Didn't you spill pepper this very mornin'?"

"And suppose I did? Nothing came of it."

"Ain't you a leetle bit mistaken about that? Spill salt and you will have a quarrel with a woman—spill pepper and it's a man."

"I don't expect to have any quarrel with a man."

"Why, darter, you was havin' a regular set-tew with Doctor Lisle, jest now. I was a-settin' away the preserves in the hall cupboard, and I see you bobbin' your head, and you was a-talkin' low, and I knew you was a-havin' some kind o' dispute. When I see you bobbin' your head, I know you're riled, and I noticed his face got as red as a beet," returned Aunt Huldah, positively.

Charlie laughed aloud.

"Oh, that wasn't a regular quarrel. I was only setting the doctor on nettles. I saw he was awfully jealous of Captain Standish, and I thought I would help it along, just for fun."

"What were you saying to Lacy Lisle about me?" asked Fannie, in a vexed tone.

"Nothing at all about you. I was only praising the captain. He was running him down, just because he thought you were not paying all the attention to himself, and I thought I'd admire the captain,—that's all."

"Well, you had a dispute with the doctor—the sign come true," chuckled Aunt Huldah, "and there's more in dreams than most folks think on. Now, as I was a-tellin' Harold, I dreamed that he was married to Fannie——"

"How could you?" broke in Fannie. "What must he think?"

"Bless your heart, he knew your Aunt Huldah afore you was born and he knows I could allus see ahead—I allus feel it in my bones when trouble is comin' tew anybody. Now, there's little Lucy Westwood. She was laughin' at me t'other day because I told her she was a-havin' all her laughin' days now, and that she was born to sorrow. I've allus observed that them that laughs most in their young days cries most when they're old. She was born on one o' the onluckiest days in an onlucky month—November," sighed Aunt Huldah.

"You are almost as bad as Uncle Harris. Why, he predicted all sorts of horrors for Lu," said Fannie.

"When was that?" asked Charlie. "Why didn't you tell me?"

"Oh, this very afternoon, so much has happened that I forgot all about it."

"What did he tell her?" asked Aunt Huldah, with interest.

"Why, that somebody would be in jail, and there was a hint of murder, a gallows in the background."

"Who was in jail?" questioned Charlie.

"That was beautifully indistinct—it was was some woman with black hair. I think Lu believed every word, for she guessed it was Crazy Aggie."

"I should wonder a mite if it was," assented Aunt Huldah. "It wouldn't surprise me the least bit in the world if she killed somebody one o' these days. I don't think it is safe for her to be let out. She'll bear watchin' "

"And that was all he told her?" queried Charlie.

"Oh, he said she would marry and become a widow, and that she would have a second husband, and a lot more of that sort."

"You had yours told, of course?"

Fannie related the circumstances of Blind Harris' visit, and the portion relating to her own fortune.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PISTOL SHOT.

"There is folks that can look intew the futur," remarked Aunt Huldah, reflectively. "I shouldn't be surprised one grain if what he said come true.

"Now, you know I lived with Mrs. Standish when Harold was a baby, long afore I came here. That was when they lived on the old place in Ellington. I was married from there. I stayed on till Harold was twelve years old, and when I was married I lived next house, that Mrs. Standish owned, and allus was on hand tew dew the spring house cleanin'. I hadn't child nor chick o' my own, and I was set on Harold. He was a'most like my son. You remember how I took on when I came back from that visit tew his mother, three years ago this June—why it's June now. That was the year Harold 'listed.' I felt it in my bones that he's git killed and murdered by them 'ere Injuns."

"For once you can be happy that he escaped," remarked Charlie.

"Yes, tew be sure, child, I know all that, and I'm thankful, but it don't dew to flop yer wings and crow afore you're out of the swamp, and he's got more'n a year tew serve yet. Massy knows what may happen tew him afore the year's out," droned Aunt Huldah, in a doleful tone.

"You are bound to look on the dark side, auntie," said Fannie. "He is just as likely to escape without a scratch as he is to be—to be hurt."

"Three times and out," quoted the old lady, lugubriously. "It would be jest like Mrs. Standish's luck. She had tew sons killed already.

"Two sons killed?" echoed Fannie.

"Tew be sure. Miles was killed by bein' throwed from a hoss an' wagon,—a runaway hoss, 'twas. Mason was drowned in Snipsic Pond."

"It don't follow that because his brothers were killed he must be. Don't borrow trouble, auntie, dear; just for the novelty of the thing make yourself comfortable."

"There's one consolation, gals, if I borry trouble now I sh'll git kind o' used tew it when it comes," answered Aunt Huldah. "There, now, you have did up the dishes, and sot the table while I've been restin' my lazy bones. I dare presume, say Harold is wonderin' what's keepin' you gals. You run along in, and I'll git my knittin' work and come purty soon, and have a little spell o' visitin' with Harold," and she bustled away.

"Lucy Westwood is in the kitchen, and she wants tew see you, Fannie. Somethin' about a dress pattern, she said."

Aunt Huldah entered the room knitting work in hand, delivered the message and seated herself, while Fannie made her way to the kitchen, where she found Lucy waiting.

'Why don't you come in, Lu? We are having a sociable chat," invited Fannie.

"No, Fannie, I've no time. I have just got a note from Dick. He is going to take me out for a row on the pond. Mother supposes I am at your house to spend the evening, so be careful not to betray me, if she should mention my being here."

"Of course, I won't say a word, but I should advise you to tell her frankly, all about Dick. Your mother is your best friend," advised Fannie, with earnestness.

"I have begged her to allow him to visit me. She refused, and forbid me even to speak to him, if we met. Now, if she was at all like your mother, it would be different. But you know that Deacon Norman is as much opposed as she is, and that makes it cruelly hard on Dick and me. I love him too well to give him up, and he loves me, and says he will not be parted from me if fifty fathers and mothers stood in the way."

"It is dreadful for your families to be so at variance," admitted Fannie, "and I am so sorry for you."

"And you will be very careful not to make a mistake if mother mentions my spending the evening here."

"I will be very careful, and I will mention about your getting a pattern here, if you wish. I don't think that could be very wrong," agreed Fannie.

"Well, you are the best girl in the world, Fan, and I'll try to make it up to you sometime. I must go now. Dick expects me to meet him at the willows at half-past eight, and it is a quarter past now."

"Well, be careful. If Mark Kirby sees you he will be sure to tell tales," cautioned Fannie.

Bidding her friend good-night, Lucy hurried away, and entering the old mill, made her way to the opposite side, where the cluster of willows close by the bridge shadowed the ruined roof.

In a serious frame of mind, Fannie returned to the company, for she feared her friend would reap a harvest of sorrow.

She knew that Lucy and Deacon Norman's son, Richard, had been lovers from childhood, notwithstanding the fact that the deacon and Mrs. Westwood had been foes for many a year, since the time when Sophronia Ward had refused the deacon's brother.

Crossed in love, Gardner Norman ran away to sea. The vessel in which he sailed was lost with every soul on board, and from that day, Lemuel Norman had designated Sophronia Westwood as "that heartless flirt that killed Gard."

The course of true love between their children did not run smooth. Mrs. Westwood forbade Lucy to see or speak to Dick Norman, while the deacon had given a similar command to his son.

Fannie joined in the conversation, doing her best to be agreeable, but the doctor rallied her upon her absent manner.

Aunt Huldah had dropped into the chair Fannie had vacated beside the captain, and the doctor took a seat beside Fannie and strove to monopolize her, but he could not fail to observe the look of admiration in the captain's fine eyes or the blush that mantled her cheek when she met his glances.

A most startling interruption occurred. The sharp crack of a pistol outside the open window, and the whistle of a bullet that just grazed the captain's shoulder-strap and was buried in the wall within an inch of his head.

In an instant he had extinguished the lamp and bounded through the window. A dark figure, just a shadow, vanished within the doorway of the ruined mill, whether man or woman, he could not determine.

A thorough search through the old building was fruitless, and he returned to the cottage.

"Tell you what it is," said Aunt Huldah. "'I mistrust it is Crazy Aggie. There ain't nobody 'round here to hurt a-body except it might be her. Mrs. Kirby has had her locked up for a spell. She was crazy as a loon—had one o' her bad spells yesterday, so Sally Higgins was a-tellin' me."

"It must have been her face I saw at the window," said Harold. "I wondered why the grating was there, but I have not thought of it since."

"It was she," returned Mrs. Alden. "The

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poor thing is insane, and they frequently confine her in the east room."

"Is she Mrs. Kirby's daughter?" asked the captain.

"Oh, no, no relative. She is only a boarder at Hilltop, with her mother, who was a school friend of Mrs. Kirby. Mrs. Gilmore refuses to have her daughter sent to an asylum, and pays liberally for board and care."

CHAPTER IX.

A RASH STEP.

Lucy made her way through the musty old gristmill, and climbed the short flight of steps that led to the sawmill.

A tall figure stepped from beneath the shelter of the willows, crossed the circle of moonlight, and she was clasped in her lover's arms.

A narrow belt of moonbeams fell through a gap in the decaying roof upon his bronzed, curling hair as he bent his head to take a lover's kiss.

"I was afraid you would not keep the appointment," he whispered. "I have been waiting for fully ten minutes."

"I came as soon as I could. I was obliged to tell a fib or mother would have kept me at home. I told her I was going to see Fannie Alden and get a pattern. So I did go, just for the looks, you know. Fannie wouldn't tell, but Charlie isn't in the secret, and she might have betrayed us without intending any harm. Besides, if Mark Kirby should be prowling about he couldn't tell tales."

"I have something to tell you, and we may be interrupted, or overheard, here. Mark may be prowling about. I have my boat, and we will row out where we can be safe from prying eyes and listening ears."

Outside the circle of deep shadow cast by the crumbling mill the moonlight rested in silvery radiance, but keeping in the shelter of the willows the lovers crossed the bridge, to the narrow footpath leading to the edge of the pond.

A moment later a rowboat glided away, propelled by Dick's strong arms, and leaving a ripple of foam in its wake.

The willow-fringed bank on the right rose abruptly, casting a sombre, irregular line over the water.

Rowing to a deeply-shaded point, Dick dropped the oars and allowed the boat to float under the shelter of the eastern bank.

The report of a pistol broke the silence, the reverberation sounding out preternaturally loud.

"Where was that shot?" asked Lucy, in a frightened tone. "It seemed to come from the direction of the bridge."

"Only an echo,—some fellow out shooting woodchucks, probably the Bixby boys. The pests are destroying the pea and bean vines, and doing a lot of damage. I heard Frank Bixby say he was going to hunt them tonight," returned Dick, carelessly.

"I was sure it came from the direction of the bridge, or from the old mill. I was afraid that it might be Mark Kirby. Fannie told me that she had a quarrel with him this afternoon, that they have company, a Captain somebody, and that he knocked Mark down for lashing the puppy. Mark threatened to have revenge, and he's just mean enough to try to scare Mrs. Alden and the girls."

"Nothing of the sort," declared Dick. "He is bad enough, but he's a miserable coward. If he got knocked down he would only bluster, but you may be sure he wouldn't try to frighten the women when there as a man around."

"What is the matter? You wrote you had something to tell me," Lucy said, after a long pause, while her lover sat looking out across the smooth water.

"Yes," he answered, hesitatingly. "I have something to tell you. I suppose you will not care much, but I could not go away without a word. I could not leave you without a farewell."

"Leave me?" gasped Lucy. "What have I done that you should treat me so?"

"What can I do less, after what has passed? You cannot blame me. It is all over between us. I cannot control my heart. Forgive and forget me."

There was a momentary silence, then Lucy spoke, her tone slow and menacing. In the gloom he could not see the flash in her black eyes, the demon peeping out from the contracted pupil. Jealousy had been the inheritance of the Westwoods from generation to generation, a passion that was destined to rise in dread evidence against the girl in the dark days to come, but no thought of the future was in Dick Norman's mind.

"I could forgive you for anything except unfaithfulness. Your words imply that you have been false to me. I may live to hate and despise you, but forget, forgive,—never— Don't tell me the name of my rival, lest I—I——"

"Lucy! Lucy!" broke in Dick. "Are you mad? Never for a moment have I been unfaithful to you in thought or deed! You are the love of my life. When I cease to love you I shall cease to live."

He bent forward and took both her trembling hands in his own.

She drew a long, sobbing breath, and the hands he held were not withdrawn.

"You love me and yet you speak of leaving me," she whispered. "There is some mystery. Tell me what it is. Do not keep me in suspense."

"What is there left to me? Your letter nearly broke my heart, but since you have chosen to cast me off, I cannot remain near you. I will not see you the bride of another."

"My letter? What letter? I have not written you a word. For the love of Heaven explain what you mean!"

"This letter, your letter," he returned, drawing a note from his vest pocket, a tiny sheet enclosed in a diminutive envelope. "Surely you understand."

"I have written you no letter. If you have received a letter it is a forgery," she cried, with a hysterical little sob.

"I have my matchcase here. You shall read the note yourself and maybe you can explain and make me the happiest man alive."

By the light of the flickering taper she read the contents.

"Dear Dick:—Mine no longer, since we must part. I have thought it all over, and our engagement is better broken than kept. I am sorry for you, and for myself, but I cannot longer disobey my mother. Your father is bitterly opposed as he can be, and I will not consent to enter a family where I must be unwelcome. Do not seek me. I will never meet you again, willingly. In time you will love again and be happy. Forget and forgive one who will always wish you every happiness. LUCY."

"It is a vile forgery! I never wrote that letter! How could you believe me capable of such wickedness, such heartlessness?"

"Why should I doubt it? The handwriting is your own——"

"No! It is a clever forgery. Where did you get the letter?"

"Hollis Bixby brought it from the office, the night before last."

"And you believed it. How could you?"

"I scarcely know, yet a doubt of its authenticity never crossed my mind."

"The writer has failed in the object intended, and we will be happy in spite of all," smiled Lucy.

"Too late! My God! How can I tell you what I have done. Forgive me, little sweetheart. My foolish haste has caused me to do what I would give my right hand to undo," groaned Dick. "I have sold my liberty—I am no longer a free man."

"What have you done?" cried Lucy. "Oh, dear, please don't keep me in suspense. You surely have not committed a—a——"

"Crime? Is that what you would ask? No, sweetheart, but I have bound myself into a slavery that must part us for five long years."

"How? Tell me," she whispered, faintly.

"You know there is a recruiting officer at Hartford. I received the forged note the night before last. Yesterday I went to Hartford and—and enlisted," returned the lover with a half sob in his manly voice.

"Enlisted? Oh, Dick!"

"I realize how foolish I was. By my hasty action I have laid up a store of sorrow for both of us. God alone knows what may be the result of my rashness. Can you forgive me, darling?"

"I do forgive you, but I am so sorry. Maybe I would have believed if I had been so cleverly imposed upon. How came you to think of such a thing?"

"As I said, it was Hollis Bixby that brought me the letter. He waited a bit while I read it. I think my face must have betrayed the secret, for he asked me what was the matter, and I—I told him. Then he tried to cheer me, and finally suggested that we should both enlist, promising that the excitement of a soldier's life would cure me of my folly, as he termed it. I consented, and together we went to the city."

"And Hollis was enlisted, too? It will break his mother's heart. How I pity her!"

"Reserve your pity. Hollis waited until I had signed, and then coolly told me he had changed his mind. I wish he was at the bottom of the sea!"

"But, surely you can—can——"

"Can what, dearest?"

"Why, explain everything. They won't force you to go unwillingly after being trapped."

Deeply grieved as he was, Dick could not repress a faint smile, as he replied:

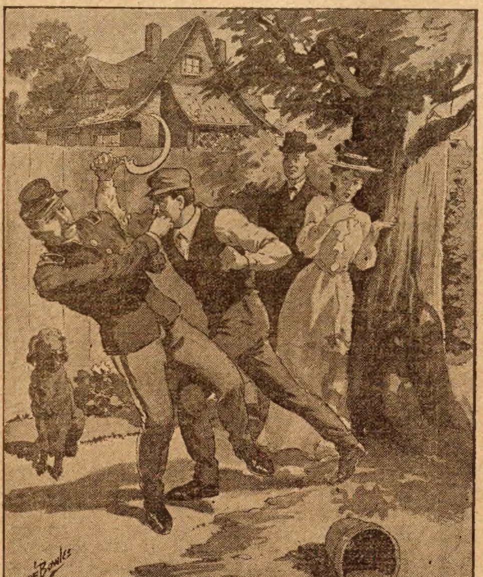
"Little they would care for explanations. I am bound to Uncle Sam's service, hand and foot, for the next five years."

"And you cannot get free?"

"No. That is an impossibility. There is no help. I must go."

Lucy sat still and silent, her head drooping, her hands cold and trembling in her lover's clasp.

This strange and romantic story will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. Do not miss the pleasure and instruction of reading this story to the end. If you are not already taking the Ledger regularly or if your subscription has expired, we strongly advise you to subscribe at once and get the balance of this startling story, as well as numerous great and thrilling serials that are awaiting publication in this best of all story papers. If the reader would like one of our King Cameras or if you would like six standard patterns without cost, please note the announcement of these premiums on pages thirteen and fifteen.



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Even a good argument is nine-tenths wind.

Much that passes for patience is merely laziness.

Some men resemble goats; they can't help butting in.

Face powder is the kind that lays out the insect, man.

Experience is the cream of life, but age often sours it.

A girl hasn't faith in a mirror that tells her she is ugly.

Laughter is the sound a man hears when his hat blows off.

Man has faith in anything he has never tried to reason out.

Good fortune nearly always finds a man in a receptive mood.

No small boy minds catching any disease during the school term.

In the lottery of life the dentist is always drawing something.

What's the matter with the hands of a baseball player as a fly trap?

When a man drops his coin at the races he can charge it up to running expenses.

When you hear anything that is too good to be true it is time to stand from under.

If it be true that a pretty girl attracts only silly men, sensible men are as scarce as hens' teeth.

Fortune awaits the genius who can invent a drum that can be heard only by the small boy beating it.

If a man pretends to be afraid of his wife she isn't so apt to invite her mother for a six-months' visit.

An average woman can get more real enjoyment out of a funeral than a man can get out of his own wedding.

Although a man may not be able to walk straight when he returns home at 2 a. m., his wife is apt to talk that way.

No man is master of the entire range of human knowledge—with the possible exception of a village justice of the peace.

Until automobiles can be operated with one hand the old-fashioned horse and buggy is good enough for a girl and her best beau.

During the honeymoon the happy couple sit and hold hands until the hired girl gives notice—then wifie's hands are otherwise engaged.

Many a good man lives and dies in the bachelor class because no widow pities him enough to show him the error of his ways.

The people of the United States consume a billion pounds of coffee a year, without counting the stuff they mix with it after it comes here.

By
GEORGE WEYMOUTH.

WHEN I WAS DEAD;

Or, THE WAY OF THE TRANSGRESSOR.

[Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 40, October 5. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

I DECIDE TO REMAIN DEAD.

I remained in jail for one long wholesome hour. Then the door opened and the sheriff came in.

"Well, Smith," said he, genially. "I've come to take you out. You're going to have a preliminary hearing before 'Squire Hankins."

"And then I'll come back to jail after the first formalities are over," I said bitterly.

"Oh, he'll set the bail at a very reasonable figure."

"And who'll go my bail, Spence?"

"I'd go bond for you myself, only the law doesn't allow a sheriff to sign bonds."

"Thank you for that, anyway. But of course I'm a stranger here, and came into town under a cloud. It isn't likely that any one will stand good for my appearance at trial. I shouldn't ask them."

Justice Hankins had convened court in the sheriff's office. My uncle was there, and old Judge Walker, who smiled at me and motioned me to a seat by his side.

"I'm your lawyer," he whispered, "if you haven't any objections. Miss Talifero asked me to represent you."

"That was kind of her, and kind of you," I said.

Walker was one of the best lawyers at that bar—a ponderous fellow, six feet four in height and weighing three hundred pounds, full of quips and jokes and genial humor.

The arraignment was most informal.

I was accused of maliciously and feloniously burning a certain house and tenement belonging to Brentwood Marshall.

"Are you guilty, or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," said I.

"I am going to continue this hearing until next Monday at 10 o'clock," said the justice. "There is nobody here to represent the State, and I am told that Prosecuting Attorney Poindexter will be here on that date."

"In the meantime," suggested Walker, "I ask that my client be released on bail. As the house destroyed was one of little value, and as it is nearly certain the burning was accidental, I ask that the bail be fixed at a nominal sum."

"Five hundred dollars," said the justice.

"I have the bond ready," said my lawyer. "I think the court will find it satisfactory. It is signed by C. K. Carroll."

The bond was approved, because the merchant's signature was good for five times the amount involved. The document provided, with legal verbosity and circumlotion, that I should appear in court on the next Monday morning at 10 o'clock to answer the charge against me.

Four days at least, I was free.

I followed Judge Walker into his office across the hall, and in response to his questions, told him the whole circumstance.

"It doesn't seem possible to me that there is anything in the case," I said. "I am not a lawyer, but I can't imagine a jury finding me guilty. What do you think, judge?"

"On the merits of the case you are not guilty. But technically the thing looks bad. Let me explain. You were a trespasser. You were using the house without right, and you had taken some of the major's corn without license. These are merely trivial offenses—what the law calls misdemeanors. But the point lies here. If a man in the commission of one crime commits another, he is guilty of that other, even if there be no criminal intent. Do you understand?"

"I think I do."

"For instance if an incendiary should burn down a house he believed to be vacant, he would be guilty of arson. But if there was a man sleeping in that house, and if the man was burned to death, the incendiary would be guilty of murder, without either intention or knowledge of the fact. Your trespassing was a misdemeanor, your taking of the corn, petit larceny, but if without intent through mere criminal carelessness, you set the house afire—then that would come pretty near being arson."

"That looks bad for me," I admitted gloomily.

"Yes, if the prosecution was insisted upon. I think, however, that I can convince the State's attorney of your innocent intention, and that he will dismiss the case without holding you to the grand jury.

"Do not hope for it," I exclaimed. "Hugh Poindexter will press me to the last ditch." Then I explained the trouble that lay between us, and how Poindexter had warned me that our next meeting would be the saddest day of my life.

"Too bad, too bad," said the judge, shaking his head. "You have made a bad enemy. Hugh is a nice fellow, but he's as vindictive as the devil."

I went to the Banner office and found Barbara there.

"Welcome back, Mr. Smith," she said, giving me both hands.

"I can guess that my release is due to you," I said. "You are piling good deeds upon me till I never can thank you."

"Then don't try," she said lightly. "It was a mere formality. I needed my printer."

"You got Carroll to sign my bail, of course, and you agreed to make it good to him if I ran away."

"Yes," she said, simply. "I am not afraid of you. You are not going to jump your bail bond?"

"Not if the Lord lets me live," I declared solemnly. "I'll be in court next Monday morning. Barbara—Miss Talifero—you are my good angel."

My grateful, ardent gaze brought the blushes to her cheeks, and she turned hastily away.

That evening after supper I walked slowly out on the country road to the big house of Major Brentwood Marshall. I had made a great resolution.

A negro woman led me into the major's sittingroom. He was a widower, and childless, but he kept a big establishment, and lived like a feudal lord. His farm reached the proportions of a plantation, and he had been a large slaveholder before the war.

He bristled up like an angry mastiff when he saw me.

"What confounded insolence brings you here to my house?" he asked.

"Not insolence, but necessity, Major Brentwood Marshall," I said. "The unexpected happenings of today have made it necessary for me to tell you something which I should have told you before, but a certain pride and shame held me back from the confession. But now troubles have accumulated on me and I am obliged to ask for your help."

"You are not likely to get it," he growled.

"Yes I will, major. There is no man in the world upon whom I have a better right to call than yourself."

"Perhaps you will be good enough to take a seat and explain yourself," he said.

Instead of sitting down, I walked over to the mantel and stood looking at the portraits of a man and a woman. The two pictures were in a single frame. The man was in the uniform of a Confederate general, and the woman was the dearest and most gracious lady I had ever known.

"You have not seen Mrs. Marshall for a number of years?" I asked.

"You know her?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, I have known her all my life. I spent ten days with her, just before I committed that unfortunate crime by burning your cabin, major."

"What wild tale is this?"

"The old place is a good deal run down, major," I continued half sadly, but without turning to look at him. "There's only the Maxwell farm and the house left, enough to give that good woman her living, and enable her to keep a single servant. She still has old Aunt Miranda—ninety, if she's a day, but as vigorous as she was at the close of the war."

The old man had arisen and advanced toward me. His eyes were burning.

"Her memory in recent things is failing, but she knows all that happened in her young womanhood," I went on. "The day I left I met her down under the two big elms at the mouth of the spring branch—where the wash-bench used to be, you remember?"

He nodded his head, but did not speak.

"And she showed me the place where you climbed out on a hanging limb after the o'possum, and fell in the creek—do you remember?"

"Yes, yes," he said thickly.

"The water was deep, there, and you came near drowning, because the fall knocked the breath out of you, but he——" I pointed to the picture of the general—"swam in and saved you."

"Who in the name of God are you—that come here and tell me these things?" he cried, seizing my shoulder and turning me about so that he could look into my eyes.

"I am Howard Marshall—your nephew."

His hand fell slowly from my shoulder and he turned away and sank into a chair. I waited for him to speak.

"I seem to believe it," he murmured. "My heart tells me it is true, and yet—it is impossible."

"Why should it be impossible, Uncle Brentwood?"

"Because, Howard Marshall, poor boy, lies in his coffin at Phillips's. Did we not identify him today?"

"I had forgotten that," I said. "Was it only today—this morning? It seems weeks ago. You know I have been in jail since then. I have been charged with crime—by my own uncle—for the accidental burning of his worthless little cabin."

He arose and came to me again and threw his arms over my shoulder.

"Forgive me, my boy, forgive me," he said brokenly. "I believe what you say, but I am dazed and cannot get the hang of it yet. Come over here and sit down."

He led me to a couch, and when we were seated, he still kept his arm over my shoulder.

"Howard, my dear boy, tell me about it. I don't understand? By what cursed fate did you come to be traveling as a ragged and footsore vagabond? And who is this dead man? And how did he come to be wearing your clothes? Tell me."

"It is a very simple thing, Uncle Brentwood, and not much of a mystery when you understand it."

Then I told him how I had started to walk from Stanton, how I had stopped at the river to swim, and how the tramps had taken my clothes and left me the picturesque assortment of rags in which I had tramped to Berrysburg.

"Then this tramp who wore your clothes—he is the dead man?"

"Yes; I imagined that they quarreled, and this fellow was shot by his companion."

"But before that——"

"Before that, uncle, fate seems to have twisted things for me."

I told him how I had played cards with Black and Colonel Talifero, and of how I had won, of Black's cheating, of how he had shot the old colonel.

"The villain," he cried. "The unspeakable villain. I see it all now. When poor Talifero died, Black decided to lay the shooting at your door. The hound. I will have his life's blood to pay for this."

"I am afraid that wouldn't help me much, Uncle Brentwood," I said. "You see they have a pretty plain case against me, and it isn't likely that my good little enemy, Poindexter, who is Black's uncle, will be considerate of me."

"No, Hugh's the very devil in a prosecution. But I won't believe that he knows the truth about the shooting of poor Talifero. Black has probably deceived him. Hugh is vindictive, like all little men, who have valiant hearts, but he is not a liar."

"Perhaps not, but he doesn't like me."

"You can't blame him for that, Howard. But why didn't you tell me who you were, that morning?"

"I was ashamed of my rags, I guess. Then when I went on into town and found work, and learned that the colonel was dead and I was charged with the murder. Then I gave the name of John Smith, thinking I would have a chance to do something to clear up my name before I revealed my identity."

"Well, well," he murmured.

"I have wanted to tell you all the time, Uncle Brentwood. And tonight, after you had me arrested, there seemed no other way out of it. It seemed absurd for you to be sending me to the penitentiary."

"I should never have forgiven myself, Howard—never," he declared. "But now, what shall we do?"

"In the first place there is that pending charge of arson," I suggested.

"Pooh, pooh, Howard. That is nothing. I will tell them I was mistaken. I will apologize to you publicly for that humiliation. I was a hot-headed old fool. Can you forgive me?"

"Yes, I already had forgiven you."

"Howard, my dear boy, my dear boy," he exclaimed. "I can't hardly realize that this is my nephew. Do you know that you are the only nephew I have in the world. My own boy died when he was a babe, twenty years ago. When I am gone you will be the last member of our branch of the family. Of course you will be my heir. I always have meant that."

"I had never thought of it, uncle."

"It is the natural thing, of course. And in the meantime, all my resources are at your disposal to clear you of that absurd charge of murder. You must be cleared and vindicated. We must find some way to make that villain Black confess the truth."

We talked the matter over at length, and in the end we decided that for the present, things should go as they were.

"They think you are dead, and Black will be off his guard. I will go myself to Mountain Springs and inquire into the affair. If necessary I will send to Little Rock for a detective. We will have proof of your innocence, and then you can make yourself known and stand your trial."

"And in the meantime, I suppose I must remain as one dead."

"Yes, that will be better, Howard. We'll bury that tramp tomorrow, and let the secret remain with him until the time comes to resurrect it."

"And I will be dead—officially and legally dead. It seems strange."

CHAPTER VIII.

I FALL IN WITH THE DEMON RUMMER.

Sunday was a lonely time for me in Berrysburg. Although I had made some good friends, I still was a social outcast in the town, and made no effort to take part in the gayeties of the young people.

Most of all, Sundays were lonely, because on that day I could not be with Barbara. Every day in the week she came to the office, and although I was able to save her all the practical work, she thought it was necessary to be there.

A man who is grateful and a young woman who is gracious, can become very good friends in a month's time, where the business of life throws them together every day.

I loved her. I made no effort to deny the fact to myself. I worshipped her. It was the dearest hope of my life to clear myself of the charge of murder—not only to escape conviction, but to remove the black shadow which lay between us—so that I could ask her hand in honorable marriage.

Hugh Poindexter was my rival. I did not

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know if an engagement existed between them, but the common opinion of the town declared that they would marry. I felt that there was small hope for me, even if I could clear myself of the charge of killing her father.

But when I could see her I was happy, and when I could not see her, the day was long.

On this particular Sunday—it was the day before my trial on the arson charge—I went for a long walk across the quiet country in the afternoon.

I wanted to visit a certain local show place, called "Crystal Gorge." It lay in the head of a little steep ravine, and was a place of rough, wild beauty. There were cliffs of limestone and rock crystal, lining each side of the narrow canyon, with little caves and crannies here and there. It was a beautiful place, but an old story to the natives. They would not take the trouble to go out there on a hot afternoon, so I found the gorge deserted as I stumbled my way across the rocks. There was not a sign or sound of human life about the place.

Yes, there was a sign—and a most ridiculous one.

On the smooth white face of the rock I came to this sudden warning:

"Beware of the Demon Rum."

The letters were a foot high, and written with some skill, in bright red ink.

The sign made me think of Blinks, the drunken printer whom Carroll had called the "original demon rummer."

The mystery of Binks, by the way, had never been solved.

From the day he walked out of the Banner office, declaring himself "ruined," and vowing that he never would take another drop, poor Binks had not been heard from.

His mother came around to the office every day to enquire about him. She seemed to fear that he was dead, declaring that if he was alive and in his right mind he would be sure to write to her, "for however wild my boy may have been, he loved his old mother and he knows I am anxious," she would say, and then go out with a tear stealing down her withered cheek.

And this sign made me think of Binks. "Beware of the Demon Rum," it said.

It was a curious sign to be in such a place, where people so seldom would see it. I went up close to the face of the cliff and saw that the paint was scarcely dry, and the little splotches which had fallen from the artist's brush to the ground were still sticky. Evidently the work had been done within an hour or two and the painter still might be in the vicinity.

I passed on up the gorge, and presently I came to another sign, this time a couplet:

"The Rose Is Red, the Violet Blue,
The Demon Rum Is Pink of Hue."

This was astonishing, if not very good poetry, and the paint was wet. I began to look around for the author of the verses, feeling that he must be either a practical joker or an insane man.

The gorge narrowed and closed in near the end of the way, and the broken rocks made the walking difficult. I clambered along, however, seeing little splashes of paint here and there, and wondering what I would find when I came up with the painter, who, I knew must be just ahead of me.

At last I came to the point where I could go no further, but there was another couplet, painted above a yawning, ragged place in the cliff, which seemed to be the entrance to a cave:

"Let Red-Eyed Drunkards Roar and Rave,
The Rum Fiend Hides Within This Cave."

Astonished beyond measure at this outbreak, and without a thought of the risk I might be running, I stooped down and crawled into the cave.

I found myself in a twilit chamber, as large as an ordinary room. There was a keg of red paint in the middle of the floor, and beside it a brush, still dripping. But the painter was not in sight.

Perhaps he was hidden in some of the shadowy corners and angles of the room.

Still, without a thought of danger, I began to investigate.

With somewhat of a thrill, I heard the patter of naked feet behind me.

Just as I turned, I felt a coil of rope fall over my shoulders, and tighten about my arms, and my assailant gave a yell that awoke the echoes in the little cave.

I knew that I was in the grasp of a madman.

I defended myself as best I could, but my arms were tied cunningly, and all I could do was to kick.

We fought all over the cave, I with the strength of desperation and terror, and he with the strength of madness.

There could be but one ending to such an unequal struggle. I was overcome at last, through being stunned by striking my head against a projecting rock.

When my consciousness returned I was bound hand and foot, and my captor was squatting beside the paint pot, grinning at me like an imp.

"You're drunk," said he, shaking a finger at me. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Didn't your mother teach you any better? You've soaked yourself with red liquor until you're crazy, that's what's the matter with you. I knew you'd break something, or 'pi' a form sometime. I knew it."

Binks! It was Binks, the poor demon rummer.

I saw at a glance that he was as mad as a March hare, and it was heart-breaking to listen to his incoherent ramblings.

As my eyes grew accustomed to the light, I saw that poor Binks was terribly emaciated. His face was white and hollow, and his eyes were sunk far back in his head. But they glittered like coals of fire.

His only clothing was a pair of ragged trousers, and if it had not been for the infinite sadness of the thing, one could have laughed at him.

"What are you doing here, Binks?" I asked.

"Who said Binks?" he exclaimed. "Who said Binks? I am not Binks. I am the rum demon himself, and this is my lair—my lordly lair."

And then he began to sing, in a cracked voice, some ridiculous words:

"There was a gay young rum dee-munn,
What had a lordly lair,
With green and gold complex-ee-unn,
And purple tinted hair."

There was a lot more of it, equally absurd, which I cannot remember.

"Binks," I said sternly, when he had finished his song.

"Yes, sir; that's me, sir."

"Binks, come here and untie me. Quick."

"Yes, sir; certainly, sir. I am coming."

His voice seemed quite rational now. He came and stood above me and began to fumble with the knotted rope.

"Hurry," I exclaimed.

"Sure, sir. I'm hurrying. I'm like Dave Lincoln when the chickens ate up all his wife's strawberry shortcake. I'm hurrying all I can—but you know a man can't hurry much with the chickens eating strawberry shortcake. Well, Dave, he——"

And then Binks forgot the knots and sat down beside me and began to tell a long, foolish story.

I tried to interrupt him and get him back to the business of untying the rope.

"Wait a minute, stranger, wait a minute," he would say. "I can't untie no ropes till I tell you about Dave Lincoln. That's preposterous."

Then he would go on with his story.

The ropes were beginning to hurt my feet and hands. He had tied me up skillfully, I had to admit and at last I began to grow anxious. For an hour, perhaps, I coaxed and threatened and reasoned with Binks, but all in vain.

He kept on telling about Dave Lincoln and the chickens and the strawberry shortcake.

Suddenly a new whim seized him.

"I've thought of one," he exclaimed. "I've thought of a new one and it's a peach, a dandy. I'm going to paint it."

He leaped up and ran for his paint pot and brush.

"Oh, Demon Rum, sweet Demon Rum,
You put poor Binksy on the bum."

"Now, ain't that a gem, stranger. Ain't it just a gem. Every once in a while I think of a good one like that. Sometimes I forget 'em before I get to the sign board, but I'll hurry out with this one as a warning to all thirsty mankind."

He grabbed his paint-keg and brush and hurried out, murmuring his couplet over and over so he would not forget it.

In a minute or two he was back again.

"You made me forget it," he said reproachfully. "How can I warn mankind when I forget the warning."

"I'll tell it to you if you'll untie me, Binks."

"Will you?" he asked eagerly. "I'll do that. It's a fair bargain, and what's right, wrongs no man. Tell me."

"No, you untie me first."

"You are trying to fool me, stranger," he said cunningly. "But you can't play tricks like that on old Binsky. The rum demon has sharpened his wits. You've got to tell me first. Then I'll untie you. I swear it."

"On your honor, Binks?"

"On my sacred word of honor, stranger."

"Well, this is the way we'll fix it," I suggested coaxingly. "You untie me and then I'll go out with you and help you paint it. We'll do it together."

"That's a fine scheme. Now, say it over, and as soon as I see that you know it, I'll untie that blamed rope and we'll go out together and paint the rocks red with warning."

There was nothing to do but humor him, so I recited the couplet. But I had no sooner done so than I was sorry. Binks forgot his promise and hurried out at the door.

Binks never came back to that cave.

I waited for him until night fell and a darkness that was absolutely impenetrable settled over me. I strained and tugged at my bonds, until the skin was off my wrists, but I was tied securely.

It was a bad fix to be in. Aside from the danger of lying there till I died from starvation, the madman might return at any time, with some sort of weapon and murder me. He was perfectly capable of doing it if the thought entered his head.

And then another thing struck me.

Tomorrow was the day of my trial. If I did not appear at ten o'clock, they would think I had "jumped my bond." My uncle had not yet publicly declared my innocence—he was waiting for the day of the trial to do that. It would be too late to do it after I failed to appear. Even he would think perhaps that I had run away.

And Barbara! The dear girl would have to pay the five hundred dollars, and she would brand me as an ingrate.

Thus I lay there in the darkness, torturing myself with gloomy thoughts, wondering if, after weeks or months when some adventurous boy would find my body, they would be able to recognize me and do justice to my memory.

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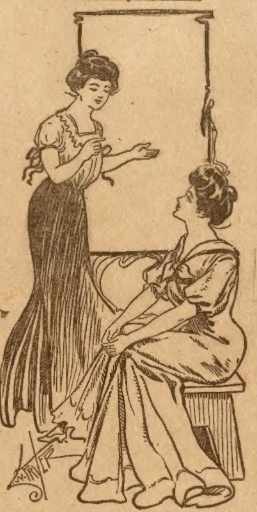
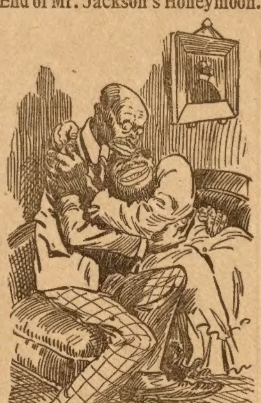


Eva—What? Allowed Jack to kiss you? Why, I thought you said you wouldn't be kissed by the best man on earth.

Edna—This wasn't on earth, dear. We were both sitting in a hammock.

End of Mr. Jackson's Honeymoon.



Mrs Jackson—Rastus, deah, does yo' b'liebe in de survival ob de fittest?

Mr. Jackson—Suttinly, love; suttinly.

Mrs. Jackson—Wa-al, den, yo' bettah git yo' life insured tormorrer.

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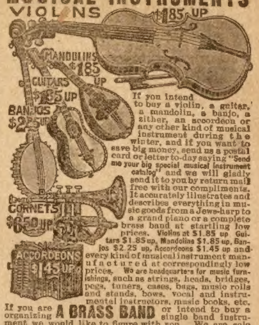

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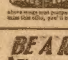
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"Lands sakes, Hiram!" exclaimed Mrs. Hardapple Cider, as they emerged from the Ultra-Tony lunchroom. "Do remove those particles of yaller egg from yeour whiskers. Folks will notice it."

"That's just what I want them to do, Mandy," drawled Hiram, as he gazed at himself in a store mirror. "When I go into a swell place where they charge 25 cents for two eggs I want folks to know it, by gum. Nothing cheap about me."

Its Cultured Name.

The little Boston girl hesitated.

"What is it, miss?" asked the polite salesman.

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A Sad Mistake.

Mrs. Mosquito—How dare you come home in that disgraceful condition?

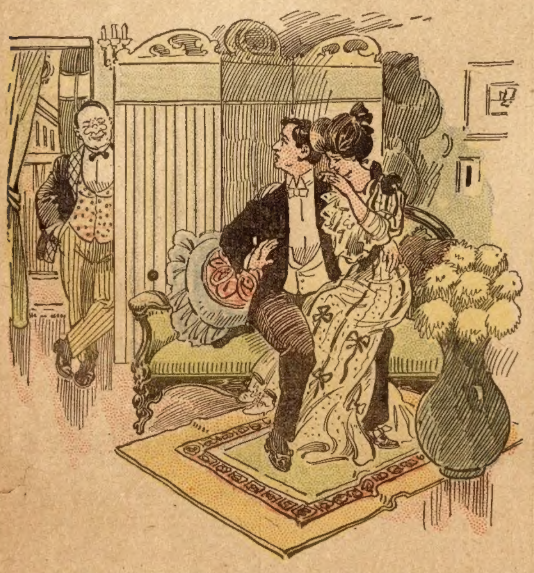
Hubby Mosquito—Couldn't help it, m' dear. I didn't know the gen'leman was from Kentucky.

He Was Lucky.

Three long years had passed ere they met again.

"By the way, young man," remarked the parson, "you never paid me for performing your marriage ceremony."

"Don't mention it," rejoined the young man. "You ought to be thankful that I didn't sue you for damages."



Patience (to her lover)—What does it mean by being married at "high noon?" Do you know?

Father (appearing at door)—Oh, yes; it means taking a 12 to 1 chance.

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of THE LEDGER will find these advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them some excellent chances of making money by selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those seeking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write the advertisers whose offers follow.

SPECTACLES FREE

Send No Money

PERFECT VISION

SPECTACLE-WEARERS! Just write me your name and address and I will mail you my free Eye Tester, also full particulars how to obtain a handsome, three-dollar pair of Rolled Gold Spectacles absolutely free of charge. Dr. Haux Spectacle Co., Block 1, St. Louis.

I WANT AGENTS ALSO.

NOTE.—This Firm is Perfectly Reliable.

$150. A MONTH PROFIT E. B. ROBERTS, BERKSHIRE CO., MASS. earns selling Electric Combs. YOU CAN EARN IT Dr. C. L. HULL, 1481 Penn Ave., Pittsburg, Pa.

AGENTS, CREDIT, Perfumes, Flavors, etc. Big profits. Express Paid. Terms Free. HERBENE AGENCY CO., Box 282, Sta'n L, New York

AGENTS PORTRAITS 35c, FRAMES 15c, sheet pictures 1c, stereoscopes 25c, views 1c. 30 days credit. Samples & Catalog Free. Consolidated Portrait Co., 290—20 W. Adams St., Chicago.

FREE OUTFIT TO AGENTS

Consisting of Clean Cut Cake Tin (its flat, thin knife will cut loose a perfect cake) and five other useful and attractive household utensils, viz.—Combination Dipper, (9 articles in one) Perfection Cake Tin, Self-Sealing Pie Tin, Favorite Cake Spoon and Rapid Potato Masher. These six articles of best material which retail for $1.00, we will send with catalog by express, absolutely FREE to any one wishing to sell our goods sending 25 cents to pay cost of packing, etc. Address Dept. DA Household Novelty Works, Chicago, Ill., or Buffalo, N.Y.

AGENTS learn to fit glasses by sending for our Free Book on the eye; it will tell you all about it. A business that pays you from $75.00 to $150.00 per month without fail; the optical profession will do it for you. No field so pleasant, profitable or so little worked. No longer necessary to work for some one else at a meager salary. Every agent should have this VALUABLE BOOK. It costs you nothing and tells all about fitting glasses and where to get the best supplies at wholesale prices. Address JACKSONIAN OPTICAL COLLEGE, Dept. F, JACKSON, MICHIGAN

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

Thirst for Knowledge.

City Belle—I hope your stay in our city will not be short, Mr. De Science.

Mr. De Science (member of the American Ornithologists' Union)—Thank you, but my sojourn must be brief. I am here attending the Ornithological Convention at the Museum of Natural History, and the sessions will soon be over.

City Belle—What kind of a convention did you say?

Mr. De Science—Ornithological—about birds, you know.

City Belle—Oh, yes, yes. How stupid of me! Do you think they will be worn much next season?

The Governor's Idea of His Job

A few days before the new Governor of Pennsylvania, Edwin S. Stuart, went to Harrisburg to take office he said to his sister:

"Say, dear, if I get sick at Harrisburg I wish you'd call a veterinarian."

"A veterinarian, Ned?" echoed his sister.

"Yes," replied the Governor-elect, "for if there ever was a jackass, I am for taking this office."

Plenty of Self-Respect.

Mrs. McSwillem—I should think you'd have more self-respect than to drink the way you do.

Mr. McSwillem—Self-r'spect, m' dear? I'm sho full self-r'spect, m' dear, that I enter every shloon by back door.

The Husband Has His Doubts.

Mrs. Newife—I acknowledge that I have my faults, and am sometimes cross, Jack, dear; but if I had the last two years of my life to live over again I should marry you just the same.

Mr. Newife—I doubt it.

She Couldn't.

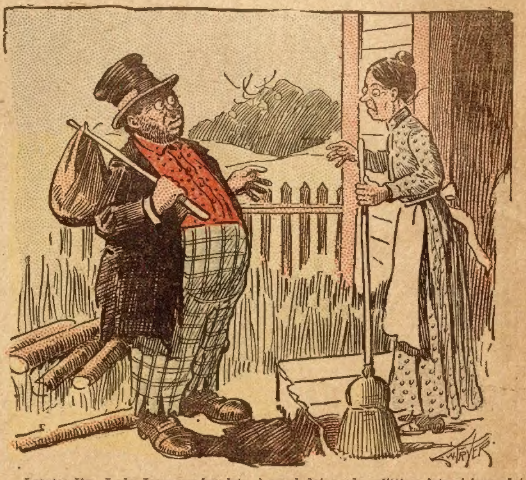
Little Miss Muffet,
Who sat on a tuffet,
Was asked to eat ice cream and cake;
Little Miss Muffet
Said "How tough it
Is—I've got a dreadful toothache."

Out of the Ordinary.

Hojax—Perkins is certainly a remarkable man.

Tomdix—Why do you think so?

Hojax—He declares that he never wrote anything in all his life that he thought was poetry.



Lobster Jim—Lady, I see you hev lots o' wood dat needs splitting, lots o' lawn dat needs mowing, lots o' house dat needs painting and probably lots o' mortgage dat needs paying!

Woman (sighing)—Ah, yes!

Lobster Jim—Den might I ask for a suit of your dear husband's clothes. He must be big an' fat an' lazy, just about my size!

Their Mistake.

"It is said," remarked the boarder who reads the patent medicine almanac statistics, "that only one woman in a thousand can sing."

"I guess that's about right," rejoined the fussy old bachelor, "but it's the other 999 who think they can that causes the trouble."

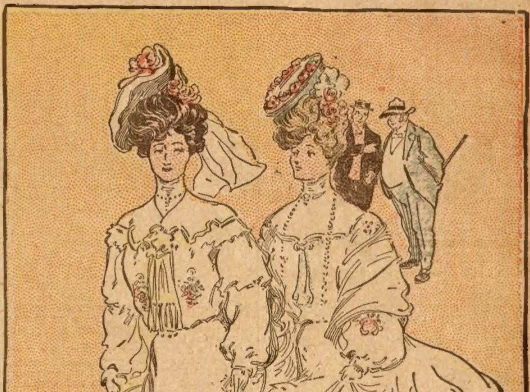
The Experiment Tried.

Spirited Woman (to Big Plug-ugly)—Oh, if I were only a man, wouldn't I teach you manners.

Celestial Voice—Your prayer is granted. You shall be a man! [Transforms her.]

Big Plug-ugly—What de ye soy?

Newly Made Man—Um—er I was merely remarking that it was a very pleasant day.



"For nearly an hour I suffered untold agony."

"What was the trouble—didn't you have any one to tell it to?"

JOLLITY

TRANSFORMATIONS

Curious Results When Coffee Drinking Is Abandoned.

It is almost as hard for an old coffee toper to quit the use of coffee as it is for a whiskey or tobacco fiend to break off, except that the coffee user can quit coffee and take up Postum without any feeling of loss of the morning beverage, for when Postum is well boiled and served with cream, it is really better in point of flavor than most of the coffee served nowadays, and to the taste of the connoisseur it is like the flavor of fine, mild Java.

A great transformation takes place in the body within ten days or two weeks after coffee is laid off and Postum used, for the reason that the poison to the nerves—caffeine—has been discontinued and in its place is taken a liquid food that contains the most powerful elements of nourishment.

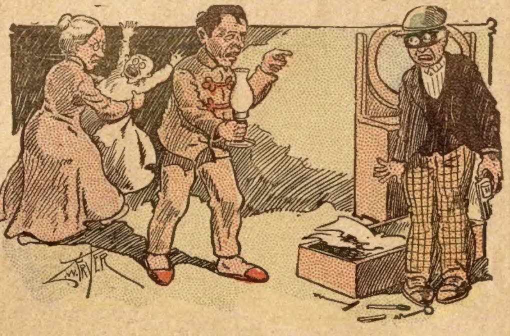
It is easy to make this test and prove these statements by changing from coffee to Postum. Read "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

What Did He Mean?

Jill—My face is my fortune.

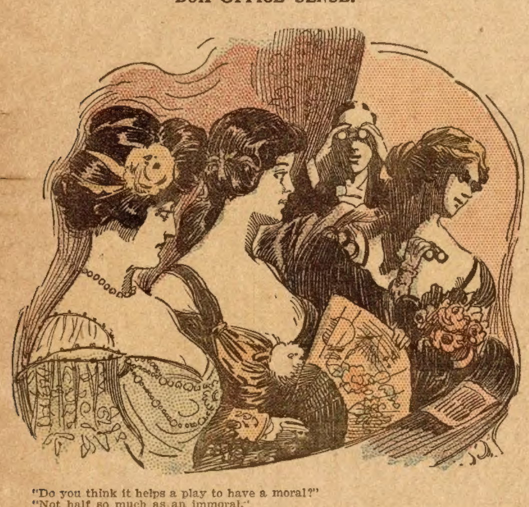
Jack—Then no one can ever say I married you for your money.

THE VITAL POINT.



Fond Parent (to burglar)—Say, you, what did you go and make all that noise for? Don't you know better than to wake a baby? Now I've got to spend about three hours walkin' him. Next time you break in here try an' be a little quiet.

BOX OFFICE SENSE.



"Do you think it helps a play to have a moral?"
"Not half so much as an immoral."

No Intent to Kill.

The most popular man in a Nevada town got into difficulty with a disreputable tough—for a long time the terror of the place—and proceeded to "do him up" in a manner entirely satisfactory to the community at large. It becoming necessary, however, to vindicate the majesty of the law, the offender was brought up for trial on the charge of assault with intent to kill. When the jury had been out about two minutes they returned.

"Well, gentlemen of the jury," asked the judge, in a familiar, offhand way, "what have you to say?"

"If it pleases the court," responded the foreman, "we the jury find that the prisoner is not guilty of strikin' with intent to kill, but simply to paralyze, and he done it."

Got Back at Him.

"So you want to marry my daughter, eh?" said the stern father. "Can you support her in the style to which she has been accustomed?"

"Well, I'm not throwing any hothouse plants at myself," replied the young man in the case, "but I can support her a great deal better than you could ever have done if it hadn't been for your wife's money."

Ample Apology.

A small boy was overheard calling his grandfather an old fool. His mother, after punishing him, sent him in to beg his grandfather's pardon, and heard him say, between sobs. "Grandfather, I'm sorry you're such an old fool."

Noise.

Rivers—Can there be such a thing as a "crying need?"

Brooks—Why not? Everybody knows there is such a thing as a howling success.

A Dainty Little Maid.

Every one ought to have her. She is dressed in pretty colors and changes the color of her skirt herself when it is going to rain. She indicates when it is wise to take an umbrella or when you can do without. She is the simplest and best of barometers. She is an ornament, a good seller for agents, a pretty gift, a good business souvenir and useful to any one. She or one of her sisters comes prepaid with full directions for only 10 cents. W. P. Randolph & Co., 78 Dearborn St., Chicago.

Roughing It.

A father and mother with six children, spent their vacation at the seaside. Immediately on arrival they set about looking for cheap lodgings.

At length they came to a notice of a "furnished room to let" and made inquiries.

"Oh, yes," said the landlady, in answer to the father's question; "it's here the room is to let, but there's only one bed in it."

"Oh, that's all right," replied the father; "we're used to roughing it. The wife and youngsters will sleep on the floor."

Both Sides of It.

Biggs—Easyun is a philosophical sort of chap. He spends a lot of time getting at the bottom facts in an argument.

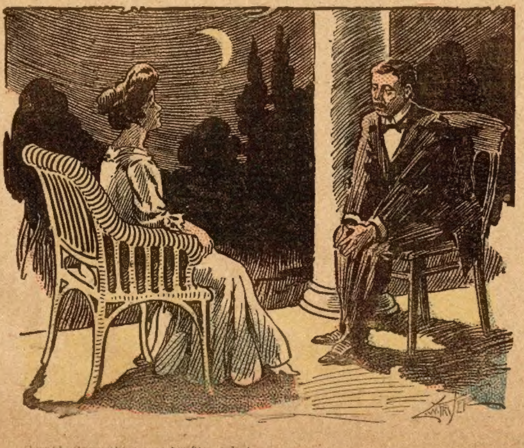
Diggs—Yes, and his wife spends a good deal of her time scraping the bottom of the flour barrel.

Contingent.

Soulful Girl—O, does it not make you happy, as Ruskin says, to watch the corn grow?

Young Farmer—Well, that depends on whether you're watchin' it grow on your side or the other side of the line fence.

HIS TIRESOME CALL.



Gerald—Some things go by fits and starts.
Geraldine—I don't want you to have a fit, but I wish you'd start.

AGENTS WANTED

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SWIFTLIT
WORKS LIKE CITY GAS
In Your Home or Store. *No "Bonfire" to start it.*

Lights like a flash with ⅛ of a match. That's a fact which will cost you only 1 cent a day to realize if you use a "Swiftlit" Lamp. *Think of that.*

Radically different from any lamp you ever saw or heard of. *Just like City Gas* and better than a dozen kerosene lamps. Gives from 100 to 500 candle-light power—a penetrating soft light, the best to *read or sell* goods by, or it will *light your whole street front* if hung over outer door.

No alcohol expense or tedious waiting. Acts simply by gravity or pressure feed. *Burners* which fit old lamps supplied cheaply. Thousands of "Swiftlit" Lamps are used by the people of the U. S. We were established in 1868.

You can't afford to be without one. If you can be our Agent in your neighborhood, write for *wholesale price on specimen* "Swiftlit" Lamp. Now, don't put it off. Write *today.* Hear by return mail. *Then* order if you want to. You will. PLANET MFG. CO., Dept. 18, ST. LOUIS.

AGENTS Wanted for Texas Panhandle Land. Knoblauch Land Co., Chicago, Ill.

$10 PER DAY selling to merchants our Novelty and Changeable Signs. Something new. Catalogue free. Hawk Specialty Co., Dept. 19, DesMoines, Ia.

$200.00 MONTHLY easily made, handling toilet necessities. No capital needed. Big outfit and samples free. Send 10c postage. W. E. Brown, Box 288, Station C, Los Angeles, Cal.

$100 PER MONTH and EXPENSES. Good man in each county to represent and advertise MAIL ORDER HOUSE. Established Business; no capital required. Dept. N B 27, The Columbia House, Chicago

AGENTS wanted to represent old established Mail Order House. Over one thousand rapid selling specialties. From $5 to $10 per day easily made; costly outfit free. GEORGE A. PARKER, Dept. 74, 720 Chestnut Street, PHILADELPHIA, PA.

SELL TOBACCO AND CIGARS. Locally or traveling. Salary or commission. Full time or side line. Steady work. Good pay. Promotion. Address MOROTOCK TOBACCO WORKS, Box X 13, DANVILLE, VA

$3 a Day Sure Send us your address and we will show you how to make $3 a day absolutely sure; we furnish the work and teach you free, you work in the locality where you live. Send us your address and we will explain the business fully, remember we guarantee a clear profit of $3 for every day's work, absolutely sure. Write at once. ROYAL MANUFACTURING CO., Box 1016 Detroit, Mich.

MEN WANTED in every locality in the United States to advertise our goods, tack up show cards in all conspicuous places and distribute small advertising matter. Commission or salary $83 per month and expenses $4 per day. Steady work the year round; entirely new plan; no experience required. Write for particulars. Address
WM. R. WARNER MED. CO., London, Ont., Canada

Don't Throw it Away
MENDIT
Does Your Granite Dish or Hot Water Bag Leak?
USE COLLETTE'S PATENT PATCHES mend all leaks in all utensils—tin, brass, copper, graniteware, hot water bags, etc. No solder, cement or rivet. Anyone can use them; fit any surface. Send for sample pkg. 10c. Complete pkg. assorted sizes, 25c. postpaid. AGENTS WANTED Collette Mfg. Co., Box 506 Amsterdam, N. Y.

—Agents Wanted—
Men and women to give whole or spare time taking orders for our popular Household Remedies. No experience necessary. Pleasant work, liberal commission and exclusive territory guaranteed. Write for full descriptive literature and territory. Address
The Vosena Co., 1163 15th St., Washington, D.C.

Make Big Profits selling the famous simplicity **Standard Hydro-Carbon Light** for homes, stores, halls, churches, streets, etc. Better than electricity, cheaper than kerosene, no smoke or odor, absolutely safe, guaranteed. Easily installed. Exclusive territory to agents, liberal terms. Our "Sales System" aids you in selling. Write for terms.
Standard-Gillett Light Co., 94 N. Halsted St., Chicago.

MAKE MONEY EASY
Agents wanted in every county to sell the popular Novelty Knives for Christmas Gifts with name, address, photo, lodge emblem, etc., on handle. **AGENTS EARN $75 to $300 A MONTH** (We show you how) Big profits—quick sales—exclusive territory. Write quick for our liberal money making special offer to agents. Our new self-sharpening scissors are the quickest sellers for lady agents.
NOVELTY CUTLERY CO., 28 BAR STREET, CANTON, O.

BIG MAIL FREE!
POST OFFICE
Would you like to get a lot of letters, circulars and packages? You probably know that manufacturers, supply houses, wholesalers and publishers buy names and addresses for the purpose of sending samples, advertising matter, papers and circulars to. Good names and addresses are hard to get and are quite expensive. We publish an AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST containing names and addresses carefully arranged in alphabetical order. We send these Directory Lists to concerns we know are anxious for good names to send advertising matter to. Write your name very plainly so the printer will not make a mistake; be sure to give your street number and town also plainly written so that any mail addressed to you will reach you without fail. We have been publishing the Agent's Directory List for several years and refer to the editor of this paper who will tell you we are reliable. All we ask is that you send 10 cents in silver and we will enter your name in our Agents' Directory List as above stated. Write today. Address
AGENT'S DIRECTORY LIST, INDIANA, Indiana County, PENNA.

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

THE WHITE SLAVE

By ELEANOR FAIRFAX.

[Copyright by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 38, Sept. 21. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XV.

POOR BLIGHTED ROSE.

"Come now, Rosy, brace up. Look at me. I'm pretty, too, and I've been in this line only a year, and yet you don't see me bawling about and making my eyes red, do you?"

No reply, save a smothered sob.

"You're in for it. Nothing will make them release you. You see there is double makings out of you. The old Colonel had left an order for some one like you, a regular peach he wanted, to go with him to Europe. The dinner was his treat before he sampled what he had bought. Yes, he bought you just as they did niggers before the war down South. You are a white slave all right, all right. I ain't. I just wandered in, but the life's gay enough, and I like it. You'll get that way soon."

"God grant I don't," Rosy whispered.

"Well, then the old pig gorges himself and drinks bottles of wine, and we find him struck down with his third stroke. He will never speak again, and his death's a matter of a day or two, so the Madame still holds you. She got the money and has you, too."

With a wail of misery, Rosy threw her arms about Violet's neck and begged, implored, besought her to assist her in escaping.

Violet shook her head. "We are prisoners here," she said. "Look at our clothes. We can't get away in these. Better make up your mind to it. You couldn't go home now, anyway."

Rosy shivered. Her mother would never forgive her, never, never. Suddenly she remembered something and asked:

"But Mr. Fletcher?"

Violet's face darkened. Jerry Fletcher's name always produced a strange change in her. Down deep in her heart there burned a fire of Jerry's lighting. It was consuming her, some day he might also be consumed. She was biding her time.

Slowly, but with every detail clearly outlined, Violet told of the vile plot, explaining that the collector and Jerry were both employed by Berstein, and that the Jew had had his eyes upon her for a year, and had merely waited until she had developed more fully, and he had received an order from one willing to pay a large enough amount. Rosy listened with calmness born of maddening despair. She dared not kill herself, for defiled as she was, she could not enter another life; her lips, blistered by the kisses of that monster, forever were closed upon words of prayer. She was a caged bird, but one who, at last, comprehended her complete undoing. Suddenly, a single ray of hope came to her. Ned might have left her because of her mother's greediness, but she felt she knew his nature enough to be sure that if he knew of her plight he would get her released, somehow. She would live with that one idea in view, and bend every energy toward getting him a message.

Violet saw the change creeping over the flushed face and wondered, but asked no questions. She had been sent in to bring Rosy about. If she accomplished her mission, all well and good. If not? Well, she was pretty smart and had quieted more than one girl, bought and sold in the market of vice.

"Will it ever happen again?" Rosy asked suddenly, her face a dull, ugly red with shame.

"What?"

"You know," and Rosy's face was buried in her hands.

Violet suddenly put her arm about the exquisitely rounded figure, and said earnestly:

"It's a shame, a disgrace to trap any one like you, poor little thing. Yes it will, that's why they stole you. Brace up, girlie, brace up. It's too bad, but you can't help yourself. If you kick too hard you'll get drugged again, you can't keep from it. They'll put it in your food, your water, inject it in your veins and charge the air you breathe with it. We are in their power. Keep a stiff upper lip, and make the best of it, that's all I can say."

Rosy stood up, her long golden hair falling about her, her great eyes filled with horror.

"And I don't dare kill myself, I'm too wicked!"

For the first time since that consuming fire had been lighted, Violet's eyes brimmed over, then she said sharply:

"Brace up, I say, and make the best of it. That's what the slaves in the South had to do. You ain't wicked now, poor little thing. It wasn't your fault, and you couldn't escape the plans were too well laid."

Rosy said nothing. The iron had entered her soul. Feeling herself forever damned, she was so desperate that if she had not been really and truly afraid of the punishment she felt was awaiting her in the next world, she would have strangled herself, and yet she was forced to keep within her flesh, already tainted, and to realize that she was doomed to future episodes equally terrible! It was enough to turn her brain. That was another hope. If all this trouble would but make her insane so she could forget, forget the Rosy who was, the Rosy whom Ned loved.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Your bill ready, Jerry?"

"Rather."

"I'm ready for it," and Sol Berstein held out his hand.

Jerry took out a sheet of paper on which were transcribed some lines of words and figures in typewriting.

"The devil!" broke from Sol's lips. "This total is a fortune."

"I guess you'll pay me," Jerry suggested languidly, lighting a cigarette.

Sol hesitated an instant, but as he had another delicate bit of business which he wanted Jerry to handle for him, he grunted, then said in his slow way:

'I suppose so, Jerry, but you do bleed us."

"Bleed, nothing! You've made a big thing out of that, and I haven't charged a cent too much. By the way, send for the money, will you?"

"Why send?"

"Because I want you to," Jerry replied impudently, standing with his foot on the rung of a chair, smoking furiously.

Within a few minutes Sol had the money in his hands, and paid to Jerry, who ran over it twice before placing it in his pocket.

"Fraid I'll cheat you?" Sol asked.

"No, I'm not a woman," sneered Jerry. "You don't war against men."

"Come, come, now, Jerry, you've made a big thing over this Rose deal, and I have a good one here for you."

Jerry tossed aside his cigarette and buttoned his coat over his money.

"No, thanks,' he said coldly.

"What?" Berstein asked, rising from his chair in his astonishment.

"It means that I'm going to cut you all, root and branch," was the cold answer.

"You are not going to leave us, after we have treated you so good?" Sol fairly whined.

"Just that. I'm going to marry, settle down, and——"

"Live off your wife's money, eh, fine," jeered Sol, wondering if there was any way to hold him.

"Exactly. For some time I've been living off the honor of a number of women, now I'll only ask the money of one," and he laughed, and his voice seemed to lack its attractiveness entirely.

Sol looked him over. He knew how utterly unscrupulous he was, and he meant exactly what he said when he spoke:

"Jerry, I pity the woman, for as you've been false to every trust ever put in you, you will make her a bad, bad husband and break her heart."

Again Jerry laughed:

"Oh, women have no souls, they are made for the convenience of men. We all believe it, even if some don't speak so openly as I do. I'm going now, Solly, ta ta," and he looked at his former employer with such real wickedness in his eyes, that Sol felt relieved to be rid of him, although he had no one to take his place.

The human spider lingered, and Tom Knight, passing him, shuddered and wondered if he would ever grow to look like that. Tom was very pale. He had read of the attack of the Colonel and was brimming with questions, but Sol shut him off.

"What's your work is your work, but that was Jerry's."

"Where is she?"

Sol snorted. His men were getting on his nerves.

"Where would you suppose? Where Jerry delivered her and there she will prove a drawing card, unless I'm mistaken."

If Tom Knight had followed his inclinations he would have knocked the Jew beneath his own desk, but he was not quite ready. However, he was resolved to leave this disreputable business and do something honest, if it was sweeping the streets. He therefore took his instructions, held his tongue, and went out into the sunshine, thinking remorsefully of the poor, deceived, distracted white slave whom he remembered as a type of all that is pure and good.

As he left, Mrs. Carrol, looking strangely old and wicked, entered the office by another door, and going up to Berstein, asked brokenly:

"Jerry left? What are we to do without him?"

"I for one can stand his being gone," Sol snapped. "As low a man as ever walked, and yet looking down on us all the while as if we were the dirt under his feet!"

Mrs. Carrol remembered what he had said to her:

"My dear Mrs. Carrol, I'm willing to play the villain for you if you pay me well, but never with you, I've not sunk that low."

"I guess we can stand his being gone,' she said at last.

"I think so, and now let's get to business,' and once more the wicked heads were bent over the book that looked like a directory.

While they were thus engaged, Violet was talking to Rosy, and Ned was wandering broken hearted along the familiar streets that had seemed so cruel or cold, although the sun was hot and more than one man was stricken with the heat.

He might have gone to the police station, but could not bring himself to do that. The thought of Rosy's beautiful face appearing in the newspapers, with all the surmises, embelished by the fertile imagination of the reporter, was too much.

"I'll hunt myself, and then perhaps she has turned up at home. I'll go out."

All during the long car ride he thought, puzzled, pondered, his agony showing upon his face so plainly that Mrs. Faith Bryant, again traveling on this line, felt it her duty to speak to him and ask if she could help him.

Ned started at the sound of her sweet voice, then he whispered hoarsely:

'I wish you could."

The lady explained who she was, and Ned eagerly caught at the slender chance.

"Perhaps you might. I have lost the girl I intended to marry,' and then he blurted out the pitiful story as he knew it.

Mrs. Bryant turned very white. "Was she a beautiful girl with a mass of golden hair, soft blue eyes, and a Madonna-like expression?" she asked.

"Yes, yes.'

Columbia Graphophones on Credit

The World's Most Perfect Talking Machine Offered to any Home in America on Small Monthly Payments.

Free Trial to Anyone—Anywhere

$1.50 per month buys a magnificent, genuine Columbia Outfit, consisting of the superb and matchless Columbia Graphophone, handsome, large, brass mouthed horn and twelve highest quality gold moulded Columbia Records. For this very small amount each month, your home, no matter how modest, may be converted into a theatre of sweetest melody. You may hear the songs of the world's foremost artists, the selections of the most celebrated bands, orchestras, soloists and comedians of two Continents. This wonderful machine will afford artistic and popular entertainment for yourself and dear ones, your friends and neighbors.

SEND FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE TODAY Simply send us a postal card and say "Send me your free catalogue of Columbia Graphophones." The catalogue will be sent to you at once, free of all charges and you can learn in detail the plan of sale. It will explain how we will send you a Genuine Columbia Outfit on free trial to your own home and if it proves more than satisfactory and you are pleased, charmed and fascinated with the results, how you can pay for it on terms, which are not only remarkably easy, but the easiest that ever have been offered to people of this country.

THE COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE is the standard talking machine of the world. Not only has it the highest reputation but it is the only machine that has not been found wanting in some particular and the only one that reproduces the human voice and instrumental selections with all the volume of the original, absolutely devoid of the rasping, scraping, screeching sounds so characteristic of other makes of machines. COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONES are made for both disc and cylinder records and the records are the only ones that produce the full lyric, liquid tones.

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"Did she come home on this line of cars?" was the next question.

"Every night."

"I think I have seen her," Mrs. Bryant said, bitterly reproaching herself. Immediately she associated Jerry (the handsome, dark young man she designated him) as the cause of the girl's absence, but she did not mention him at present. She, however, did not know the part Jerry played, simply classing him as the betrayer of an innocent girl, and not as one of the tools of an immense corporation.

"Here is my card," she continued, "and if you need me, do not hesitate to call upon me, day or night. I will make my own inquiries," and her handclasp was very comforting.

Ned felt its strength as he almost tottered along the path he had trodden so often the night before, and up through the gate to the house. Through the open door he could see Mrs. Gordon moving about, singing at the top of her voice.

The sound of her voice so exasperated him that he could hardly control his voice enough to ask:

"Heard from Rosy?"

"No, Ned, but don't worry so, she'll probably be home all right tonight. Now, come right in and lie down a bit, and I'll make you a cup of tea. You must be worn out, not eating any breakfast like you did," and Mrs. Gordon was herself as she bustled about, made him drink a cup of strong tea and swallow a bit of well-made toast. Then she put him on the old lounge, darkened the room, and left him with an injunction to sleep.

He did sleep, utterly worn out and lay in so heavy a stupor, that Mrs. Gordon was frightened, but at last, about six, he opened his eyes, realized where he was, and stumbled out to the kitchen, asking for Rosy.

"Not time for her yet."

"I'll get rid of this sleep that still seems to cling to me," Ned said quietly, "and then go and meet her." However, although he watched all night long, as he had the night before, no Rosy gladdened his eyes, but a little white slave, completely under the control of her masters, frightened, disgusted terrorized, almost lost her reason thinking of him and her terrible fate.

Yet this was in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and seven, in the great city of Chicago, within almost a stone throw of the magnificent Art Institute, and but a few blocks from a mighty pile of stone within which each Sunday the eloquence of the age was pitted against existing evils. She was beyond the pale of respectability, in the eyes of many not worth rescuing, a human being, with a God-given soul, and yet perfectly helpless, trampled in the mire, this poor Rose of ours.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOUBLE WEDDING.

After such a strain, it was but natural that Ned suffered, and the evening of the day after he had interviewed Sol Berstein, saw him tossing in a high fever at Mrs. Gordon's, and to do that most excellent woman credit (for she had many kind traits of character and virtues) she attended him as though he were her own, and never begrudged the time or trouble. An excellent physician who was called and came, although he was not at all sure of any fee, at first was puzzled to diagnose the case, but after Ned had told him of the drug he had imbibed, during a lucid interval, he understood, and worked to save the lad's life, if not his reason. Mrs. Gordon cried bitterly and nursed him while making preparations for the double wedding, for not for a moment did she relinquish her plans.

"It's bad luck to put off weddings," she declared when one of her sons suggested that they wait until they knew just how Ned would come out. To all inquiries for Rosy, she answered that she had gone on a visit, and so strange was her nature, that the mother actually believed this herself, and never gave her daughter's continued absence a second thought.

"Rosy and me had a scrap," she told her married daughter, "and she has gone off mad. She'll be back pretty soon."

The arrangements progressed, although the children went about in clothing just a little more ragged, if possible, but Ned received excellent care. This remarkable woman during the eight days which elapsed from the time Ned fell sick until the weddings, attended two, church sociables, had the engaged couples to dinner once, and delivered the invitations in person, drumming up presents. She scrubbed the house from top to bottom, made all the cakes, cooked the meats, arranged the parlor, and never neglected Ned. The brides kept away, glad to be saved the worry, but appeared early on the appointed evening, and were shown into the bedroom adjoining the one where Ned lay in a comatose state that so worried the physician that he decided to stay all night.

"I want perfect quiet tonight, Mrs. Gordon," he said, as she came into the sick room, after placing her brides.

"There's to be two weddings here tonight, and they'll make some noise, but happy noise never did hurt people," and she smiled in her optimistic way.

"I'll not answer for his life, madam," the doctor said sternly.

"The wedding day was set before he got sick," she returned cheerfully, "and as I said, happy noise won't hurt him none."

The giggles of the brides penetrated the room, the man of science glared at the woman of romance, and she left the room, not to damp the happiness of her guests by bidding them be quiet but to look after new arrivals.

In order that both receive plenty of presents and there be no jealousy, Mrs. Gordon suggested the same present be given each, and people gladly embraced the opportunity to buy in pairs, thus obtaining a slight discount.

The bay window was trimmed with rushes, home grown flowers, topped off with two palms, a little seedy, but hothouse palms for all that, and there were white roses for each bride. The clergyman waited the descent of the two, both clothed in white, with veils, for Lizzie was unconscious of any rules governing her costume as a widow, and looked very pretty as their bridegrooms advanced to meet them to strains from a phonograph, and advanced in lively two-step to the minister. No one in that locality had seen a double wedding before; it was the first the man of God had ever officiated at and he mixed names a little and had to go back and repeat, but that made the service all the longer and more delightful. The brides giggled and had to be prompted, the grooms both dropped the rings, so that there was a feeling of relief when the words came

"And now I pronounce you man and wife, I mean men and wives, I mean husbands and wives."

No one thought of laughing. Many cried, and then there was a grand rush to kiss the brides. After she had done her share, Mrs. Gordon remembered the doctor and ran upstairs, entering the sick room very quietly, however, to say:

"Now doctor, if you want to go down a little till it's time to bring on refreshments. I'll sit with him."

The physician gave her a look of positive exasperation

"Why should I want to go down?" he asked. "Isn't it enough you are trying to kill my patient without my countenancing it?" He said it in a tone that made her shrink back, yet if he had realized what a sacrifice it would have been for her to have given up a single moment of the entertainment, he might have appreciated her offer. It was more than a success, this double wedding. Mrs. Gordon had the added pleasure of seeing herself spoken of in the local paper as the social leader among the young people, and her house called "The Gordon mansion, with doors always thrown hospitably open." The evening was perfect to her, and Paw, sobered up in some mysterious way known only to herself, had given away the brides in a way that testified to his sincerity, although he did make a slight mistake and insisted upon doing it at the wrong place in the ceremony. His mind was a little upset by the signs of luxury about, but when his wife assured him it was not family money that was used, and that it never need be paid back, he settled himself in a corner with a plate of food, ate and then fell asleep until his sons bundled him to bed in the unfinished part of the attic, where he had slept since Ned was taken sick.

After she had sped the brides, and finally said good-by to her last guest, she entered the sick room once more, as fresh as ever, and shared the doctor's watch until the rising sun saw him sleeping quietly. Then she turned to the tired physician, saying triumphantly:

"There, what did I tell you? Happy noise never hurts any one. Why when I was married the little boy of the lady I was living with was down with scarlet fever, and he ate some ice cream and that night the fever turned. You never need put off any party for sickness. In a big family like mine if I did we'd never have no fun, for some one is always sick, you know."

CHAPTER XVIII.

WONDERFUL WORKS OF THE LORD.

"Well, father?"

"My son, you are no longer a boy. What you have been through has made a man of you, and I do not presume to control you. I cannot endorse your mother's action, but by the time she comes back from her trip we will all feel kinder."

"She went on, then?"

"Yes, for she said she could not bear to come back and face defeat. Your mother is a proud woman and you were her all," and there was a trace of reproach in the kind man's voice, which Ned was quick to notice

"Forgive me, father, if I have caused you pain but I have had a hard time of it."

"I know, lad. You look like a ghost. You know your own mind best so I give my consent."

Ned, with a cry of joy, caught his father by the hand, and the two shook hands solemnly, then the boy groaned:

"If I only knew where to find Rosy."

"You spoke of a settlement worker, a Mrs. Somebody. Have you gone to her?"

Ned struck his knee. "By Jove, father, you're worth two of me," he said cheerfully, "I'll go to her right off. This fever has muddled me."

Mr. Kennedy looked at his tall, gaunt son, feeling as though in the presence of a stranger. He was not able to be out yet, but when he had figured that Rosy had been lost three weeks he had dressed and left the Gordons, first to visit his father

"First something to eat, son," Mr. Kennedy said gently, and although he resented the loss of time, Ned waited, and as he ate the toothsome dainties to which he had been accustomed from infancy, for the same cook had been with them all his life, he realized that it was good to be home once again.

Still, glad as he was to be in his home once more, as soon as he had finished his lunch he started for the address Mrs. Bryant had given him, fearful that he might not find her at home, and thus be further delayed. As he was riding in the street car a strange thing occurred, which proves that no human being can justly estimate the power of the Divinity. Ned was riding along his thoughts full of Rosy, when he heard a young man say abruptly:

"And now that I have explained, will you give up this kind of foolishness and act decently?"

Instinctively he raised his head. Sitting across the aisle from him he saw a very pleasant appearing young man with a girl, handsome in a coarse way, whose eyes were filled with tears.

"I'm telling you this to save you," the young man continued. "Do you understand? You were very willing to flirt with me, and yet you knew nothing of me. I was sent after you. You would have disappeared without a word and never have seen any of your folks again."

"Why do you tell me then?" asked the girl

"Because I intend to stop this kind of

(Continued on page fifteen.)

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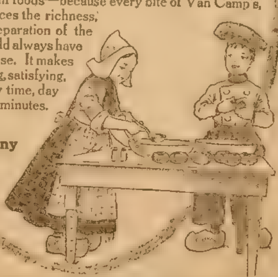

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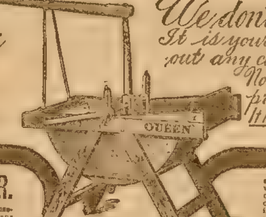

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CHAPTER IX.

"The first thing to be done," remarked Dan, "is to get a move on us."

"But what can we do?" questioned Blurton. "B. C. & G. stocks are gone down to 32 cents on a dollar of the par value, and will probably drop to 25 cents in another day or two. So you see it is useless to try to stem the tide. There will be a rush to unload as it becomes known that the D. & H. is to be pushed through ahead of us, and we shall be forced to the wall. You said you saw a way out. In the name of heaven then show it to me."

"I'll do it," nodded Dan. "Just keep up your nerve till this time tomorrow and see what will happen. I will call on you then, and if you decide that I have kept my word, we'll go to work in earnest."

A few minutes later Dan took his leave. He was driven to Wall street, where he entered the office of "Walford Abernathy, broker," and asked if he might see Mr. Abernathy at once.

Dan was conducted into the private office of the broker, who was a kindly face man of sixty.

Walford Abernathy had been a broker for thirty years, and it was said of him that he knew more of the ins and outs of Wall street than any man living; and that he might have been worth his millions instead of a mere comfortable fortune which he had accumulated, had he been less honest.

He looked at Dan curiously as the youth came into his presence.

"Well, my boy, what can I do for you?" he asked.

"I should like to have you buy some stocks for me," Dan replied.

"So you want to try your luck on the street, do you?" smiled the broker.

"Yes, sir," replied Dan.

The broker was silent for a moment.

"You are a minor, are you not?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," responded Dan, "but the money I have to invest is my own, and I have not a living relative on earth that I know of."

"Ah, I see. My reason for asking is that I have made it a rule never to encourage speculation among young men. It stimulates a passion for gambling, and has been the ruin of thousands of young men at the very outset of their career."

"No doubt that you are right," replied Dan, "and I honor you for what you have said. Nevertheless, I am forced to go into the investment I am about to make by a number of corcumstances, among which is the desire to save a friend and punish an enemy."

There was something so firm, so dignified and resolute in the words uttered by the youth that the old broker was suddenly drawn to him.

He gazed admiringly into Dan's frank, open countenance, with its lines denoting courage and resolute purpose, and a quiet smile played over his kindly face.

"I see that you have got the fighting qualities in you," he remarked, "and that counts for something if a fellow gets into the street. What stocks do you wish to handle?"

"The B. C. & G. railroad," replied Dan.

The old broker started, and then a queer smile hovered about his lips.

"By thunder! you could not have struck anything worse!" he exclaimed. "The bottom will drop out of the B. C. & G. in another day or two, if something don't happen."

"Something IS going to happen," smiled Dan.

The old broker was silent for a moment, in which he studied the face of Dan critically.

"I always make it a point," he said presently, "to give those who give me their business the benefit of the best advice I can give. I should not advise you to invest your money in the B. C. & G."

"That is natural," nodded Dan. "I appreciate your kindness, but I must have all the stocks of the B. C. & G. that are offered tomorrow. What are the quotations for today?"

"Twenty-eight," replied the broker. "You must be mad to think you can take all that are offered. Why, the whole one hundred thousand shares may be unloaded on you!"

"Very well."

The broker stared in blank amazement.

"Do you aim to say that you are prepared to meet such an emergency? The par value of the stock is one hundred dollars a share, and though they are now at twenty-eight, such a plunge as you anticipate might send them flying sky high."

"That will not matter," replied Dan. "I want the shares, all that are offered, and I commission you to buy them for me."

"But—my dear boy!" gasped Abernathy, aghast, have you figured out the cost? Have the funds to meet it?"

Dan drew a number of bank books from his pocket and passed them to the broker.

He took them, ran over each one with rapidity, and then sank back in his chair his face the picture of amazement.

"By heavens!" he ejaculated, when he could find voice, "this is amazing! Why, you are a second Monte Cristo! By thunder! who could have imagined such a thing when you came into my office!"

He leaned back in his chair and surveyed the youth in a maze of wonderment.

"Mr. Blurton is holding a large number of shares in the B. C. & G.," remarked Dan, "and it is not likely that he will throw them on the market, as I am working to pull the road out of the mire."

"By George! this will be an explosion that will shake the D. & H. up in a way to give Purcell a fit of ague!" ejaculated Abernathy. "I'd give a good deal to see his ruddy countenance when it takes place. Why, if you back the B. C. & G. there will be one of the liveliest scrimmages before the end has been reached that has been seen since the building of the Denver & Rio Grande."

"Oh, we expect that there will be something doing," averred Dan, calmly, "but we shan't mind that a bit."

"You are acquainted with the situation, I suppose?" said the broker, "and know the rivalry existing between the D. & H. and the B. C. & G.?"

"Yes, sir, and know something of the parties who are back of each enterprise."

"You have got a big fight on your hands."

"I know it, but I shall carry the B. C. & G. through," declared Dan, with vehemence, "if we have to employ a standing army to do it!"

A half hour later, having completed all arrangements for the next day's program, Dan left the broker's office and returned to his hotel.

For some time after his departure Walford Abernathy sat silently puffing at a strong cigar.

"By thunder that boy is an enigma to me!" he muttered. "Where could he have gotten hold of all that money? Who ever heard of Dan Danford? Where is he from? and what object has he in the move he is making? Can it be that he has some powerful syndicate back of him? By thunder! I give it up."

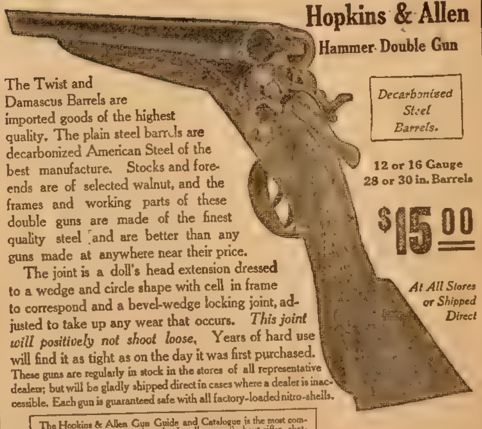
CHAPTER X.

The next evening when Dan Danford called at Blurton's hotel, he found the president of the B. C. & G. in a state of nervous excitement.

It had been a day that he would long remember. When the Stock Exchange opened Abernathy bought 5,000 shares of the B. C. & G. at 27. Inside of an hour he had bought as many more at the same figure, and then the stock advanced a few points. Still the buying continued. He had bought 20,000 shares at an advance of a few points when they went up to 35. The heavy buying excited wide-spread comment, and by the time 10,000 more shares had been secured the price jumped to 45. Who was buying the B. C. & G. stocks was a mystery of the hour. Abernathy, Sphinx-like, said nothing but quietly took the shares as fast as they were offered.

Bennett Purcell watched the rise and heavy buying with growing amazement and wonder.

Who was behind it all? What did it



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mean? For once in his life he was utterly at sea.

He was beset with fears. Was some powerful force in the financial world behind this sudden movement?

He held a hurried consultation with Aaron Dock, but that shrewd veteran of the street could give no solution to the mystery.

Still the buying continued and still B. C. & G. stocks kept on rising. They went from 45 to 60 and then to 70 inside of fifteen minutes.

But the mysterious unknown showed no signs of having his appetite for B. C. & G. stocks satiated. He snapped up everything in sight, and all sorts of vague rumors were afloat. Those who had sold early in the day railed on their misfortune for not holding out a little longer, and a few who had never thought of touching B. C. & G. stocks began to make bids, but the unknown was always a point or two ahead, and so continued to absorb all in sight.

By this time Purcell was in a fever of excitement, and when B. C. & G. went to 85, D. & H. stocks dropped from 87 to 84.

At this the face of Purcell took on an ashy hue.

There was some damnable plot behind it all, he told Dock. But that individual shook his head and refused to offer any solution.

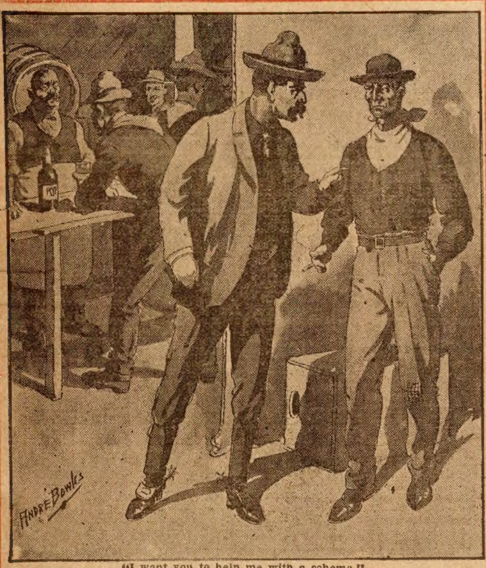
The whole matter was a mystery. He would not attempt to explain it.

With the closing of the Stock Exchange for the day, Abernathy had bought 48,000 shares for his unknown client, the last being at 97.

This was quite enough for Purcell, who went to his hotel in a state of bewilderment bordering on frenzy.

Not only had B. C. & G. stocks leaped almost to par in a few short hours, but D. & H. had dropped six points.

He walked the floor and swore under his breath, but even the astute Dock, who was usually infallible as a comforter, could offer no solace.



"I want you to help me with a scheme."

And as for Henry Blurton, he had watched the events of the day with nervous excitement and deep satisfaction.

He remembered the words of Dan Danford, who had promised that something would drop before the end of the day, but he could not bring himself to understand how it was possible for the youth to have accomplished what seemed a miracle.

So it was with a feeling of keenest delight that he saw the mysterious youth put in an appearance a short time after the closing of the Stock Exchange.

"In the name of heaven, my boy, what is the meaning of all this big deal in B. C. & G. stocks?" he cried, as Dan came into his presence.

"It means that I have bought 48,000 shares, about all there were to be had," replied Dan, "and now we are ready to lead Mr. Purcell a rather merry dance!"

The face of Blurton was a picture of amazement, and for a moment he could only stare in silent wonder.

But Phil sprang forward and grasped Dan's hand.

"I knew you were going to do something surprising!" he cried "I saw it in your eye yesterday."

"I think we have got pretty much all the stock of the B. C. & G. coppered," continued Dan, "and the next thing to be done is to push the line through with the greatest speed possible."

The railroad president wrung Dan's hand.

"You have saved me from utter ruin!" he breathed with emotion. "I can hardly realize it. Great heavens! how did you do it?"

For reply Dan tossed a number of bank books to Mr. Blurton.

"Look at my balances in these," he said, "and see if you think we can stand a little tussle with the D. & H."

With nervous haste Blurton ran his eyes over the balances, and as he did so he uttered a gasp of amazement.

"Great Caesar!" he ejaculated, "you are a veritable Croesus! Why, with this capital at your command you can defy all the powers of Wall street!"

"I think we can cope with Bennett Purcell, to say the least," affirmed Dan. "And now," he added, a swift color coming over his face, "I am ready to begin repaying Bennett Purcell for all he has made me suffer, and for ruining and causing the death of my father!"

He spoke with feeling, and there was that on his face that showed a resolute purpose that nothing could turn aside.

"Good for you!" ejaculated Phil.

"Whatever funds are needed to push forward the construction of the road," continusd Dan, "can be readily secured. The company has only to issue bonds for the necessary amount and I will see to it that they bring the proper price."

"Then we have the whole mater in our hands," nodded Blurton. "Let us begin work at once. The bonds can be issued immediately, as soon as a meeting can be had, and then——"

"We shall be ready to go west," broke in Dan

"Exactly, and put an army of men to work on the road," finished Blurton

The next day Mr Blurton, Phil, Dan Danford and Jim Dorsey left New York on a special train for the west.

CHAPTER XI.

"SWEET VIOLETS."

Upon a stretch of wind-swept plain, a rude board shanty stood lined against the glowing western horizon, its glaring unpainted walls making a strange contrast with the desolate landscape.

Open the door, in rude letters, was the sign, traced by the unpracticed hand of Jim Dorsey—

"SWEET VIOLETS.'

"I ain't going to say that there is anything especially appropriate in the name," commented Jim, as he bestowed the name on the town which had been laid out on the line of the B. C. & G. railroad, "but mebby it will be a little different from anything of the kind along the D. & H."

Across the "street" from the shanty was a huge wall tent which bore the sign:

"LIQUOR AND PROVISIONS—CASH PAID FOR HIDES."

These were all the structures visible to indicate that a town had been started there, but the noisy crowd that clustered about the pine bar inside the big tent gave abundant evidence of a growing municipality.

As the shadows of approaching night fell over the desolate stretch of plain a horseman that had been galloping from the north in plain view of the town for the last half hour, reined in his panting horse beside the rack, and dismounting, entered the tent.

He knocked the closed flap of the tent aside with a quirt, and strode straight for the bar.

A wizen-faced man of fifty, who was slaking his thirst over the rude bar, cast a quick glance at the stranger, and then the glass almost fell from his hand.

"Great gosh! If thar ain't Bill Newson er I'm crazier 'an a muskrat!" he gasped.

"What the Sam Hill are ye starin' at a feller like he was a freak fer, Dave Painter?" growled Bill Newson. "Come up an' wash the dust out uv yer stomach."

"A thousand pardons," exclaimed Dave Painter, stepping forward and gripping the other's hand. "I hadn't seen hair nor hide uv ye since ye went inter Old Mexico, an' I 'lowed them greasers had sorter carved ye up er put ye in a dungeon."

"Never mind about the past, Dave," admonished Bill. "The less said about that the better. What we've got ter deal with is the right now, an' hear's ter the NOW."

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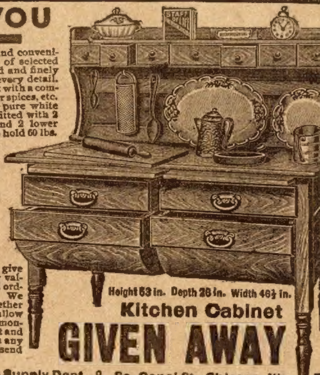

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Send $1.00 Deposit, give chest measure over vest, waist measure over trousers, weight and height and we will send you this rich, black wool freize overcoat by express subject to examination, you to pay the balance, $4.48 and express charges to agent after you examine and try on the overcoat and find it perfectly satisfactory, a perfect fit, the greatest overcoat bargain you ever saw and equal to any overcoat you have ever seen at $10 to $12 and as stylish and perfect fitting an overcoat as there is in your neighborhood, regardless of price, otherwise we will promptly refund your $1.00. Order the overcoat today or write for our big cloth sample book of over 160 samples of elegant cloths for Overcoats at $4.50 up, Ulsters $6.00 up, Suits $4.50 up, Trousers $1.25 up, and enormous stocks of sheep lined clothing **FUR COATS at $12.50** up, Mackintoshes, leather clothing, etc. Everything at wholesale factory prices.

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Any lady or gentleman wishing to correspond with the opposite sex for fun, pastime or improvement, should write at once to us. We have a large list of persons wishing to correspond. We introduce you by mail. Many pleasant flirtations and warm friends are arranged through us. Everything strictly confidential. We refer to this paper. Address with stamp for reply and membership blanks, Look Box 259,

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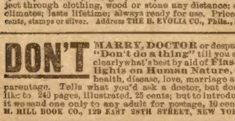

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Copy of valuable prescription sent free to men in need of help. No C. O. D. or sample treatment humbug. Read this notice through.

This is written for men, who are suffering from a broken down system as a result of youthful indiscretions or excesses. Listen to my advice. Stop experimenting with "sample treatments," electric belts, "specialists," patent medicines and other quack treatments. To continually take medicine may destroy the digestion, poison the system and render your case incurable.

For years I was nervous, weak and run down, and in order to regain my health I tried different remedies and treatments without much improvement. Finally I went to Europe and consulted a prominent physician and my health was restored under his treatment. The prescription for the remedy which cured me I still have in my possession and as I know from my own experience how difficult it is to get cured I have decided to help others and to every sufferer who writes to me I will send in sealed letter a copy of the prescription together with necessary information free of charge.

Men in all parts of this country who suffered in one way or another from symptoms resulting from overwork, youthful errors, indiscretions or excesses such as nervousness, losses, weak manhood, poor memory, lost vitality, lack of ambition, depression, bashfulness, pain in the back, general debility, etc., have taken advantage of my offer, and I have received hundreds of unsolicited letters from men, young and old, in all walks of life, saying that they also have become cured. The prescription calls for a combination of powerful, but perfectly safe ingredients, and is so written that you can get it filled in a good drug store at small cost. I send nothing C. O. D. and I have no scheme of any kind to get your money or sell you medicine that you don't want, and if you do not find me honest in every way, you are at liberty to expose me in this paper.

This notice may not appear again, therefore write me to-day and get a copy of my prescription and necessary information free by return mail. I will also inform you how I can make this offer without any loss to me. Adress:

C. BENTSON, N, Box 721, CHICAGO, ILL.

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(Continued from page thirteen.)

They touched glasses and drank.

"Come with me I want ter talk with ye," remarked Bill in a low tone as he wiped his lips, and he led the way to a seat on a pine box apart from the crowd.

"Look hyar, Dave, are ye workin' fer the B. C. & G.?"

"Well, I'm drawin' my pay, but I can't say that I'm ruinin' my constitution by over exershun."

"It amounts to the same thing. But Dave, thar's bigger game than shooin' a pair uv mules along a railroad grade."

"I've bin open ter that sort of a snap all the time," commented Dave, "but it hasn't materalized. What are ye drivin' at now days?"

"I tell ye, Dave, I've dreamed dreams an' seed visions since I last saw ye."

"Snakes?"

"No, not that kind. I've bin to New York."

"New York!"

"All the way an' back."

"What was yer game?"

Bill Newson reflected a moment.

"Look hyar, Dave," he said, "this bizness uv mine is on the dead quiet. I know ye're one uv the fellers that knows when ter keep his chin still.'

"I've bin that way a long while."

"I know it an' that's why I want ye in. You remember that I went to Old Mexico with a feller that had a perty tough job? Well, that was Purcell the Mexican cattle king. I did a nice job fer him an' got big pay, but thar's a bigger job on hand now."

"Fer the same feller?"

"Sure thing. But he's in the railroad bizness now. He's backin' the D. & H. an' he's got ter git the line through ter Holdup ahead uv the B. C. & G. It's jist got ter be did, an' I want ye ter help me with the scheme."

"What's in it?"

"Five dollars a day, an' ye don't do a tap."

"Great gosh! I'll sign up fer that fer fifty years!"

"The B. C. & G.," continued Bill, "is goin' ter make it lively fer us. Old Blurton an' his outfit are pushin' things amazin'. They are runnin' hands in by the carload, an' if somethin' ain't done perty quick, the D. & H. will be as flat as a shingle, an' the whole line wouldn't fetch sixty cents in Mexican money."

"Well, what do ye want me ter do?" queried Dave, "tear up the road as fast as they build it?"

"I'm comin' ter that perty soon," went on Bill. "The B. C. & G. has got a gang of men workin' all along the line fer fifty miles ter the north. What we want you ter do is ter go from one camp to another, mingle with them on the quiet an' git them ter quit the B. C. & G. an' come an' work fer the D. & H. They are gittin' $2.50 a day. The D. & H. will pay $3.00. That will fetch 'em in droves. But the thing has got ter be done quietly er the B. C. & G. will meet the raise. Thar's about five hundred men at work at Willow Springs Valley. You know a lot uv the boys thar, an' if ye work the thing right you can stampede the whole outfit in a single night. Wait till they quit work at night, an' then go quietly among 'em an' give 'em the tip. Once we git the men, we'll see that we keep 'em. Keep right on from one camp ter another, gittin' every man ye can. It is my bizness now ter organize workers fer the D. & H. all along the B. C. & G. line. Git a lot of the boys ter help ye. We will allow 'em five dollars a day if they will help ye with the work. Go ter the boys who have influence with the others, organize 'em an' give all the leaders the same as ye are gittin', an' old Purcell will pay the bill. Hyar's fifty dollars in advance, an' I want ye ter git a move on."

He pressed a fifty dollar bill into Dave's hand as he ceased speaking.

"Thanks, thanks, I'll see the boys an' don't ye ever fergit. I'll hit the trail fer Willow Springs right away."

"Good. Report ter me er Mr. Dock, who ye'll find in the office up at Big Crick station on the D. & H., fifteen miles ter the north. An' now, Dave, I've got ter be movin'. If I don't git ter see ye at Big Crick, jist drop in an' see Aaron Dock. He's Purcell's right hand man, an' he'll fix things.

The two walked to the bar, and after taking a drink, Bill left the tent, and mounting his horse, galloped away in the gathering dusk.

CHAPTER XII.

During the month that had passed since the arival of Dan Danford and his friends from the east, work on the B. C. & G. and the D. & H. had been pushed with feverish activity.

Aaron Dock had followed Dan and his party, and was leaving no stone unturned to further the plans of the ex-cattle king, and the D. & H. was being built as rapidly as possible.

Men were being shipped in from every direction, and these were divided into gangs and scattered along the line for fifty miles.

Meantime, Henry Blurton and Dan Danford, having laid their plans, were preparing for a coup de main. A numebr of towns had been laid out along the line, and these were widely advertised, free residence lots given to every one who would build a business house in the town and other inducements offered.

A great boom was expected all along the line, and already a large number of settlers had taken claims near the new town sites, and others were constantly coming in.

A deserted ranch house that happened to be located right on the line of the B. C. & G., and on the town site of Maverick City, was hastily repaired and fitted up as an office, and here Henry Blurton established his headquarters. The situation was such that he thought it best that he should be at a point where he could be in constant communication with all points of the line then under construction.

Jim Dorsey was in the saddle almost constantly, riding from point to point, and bringing reports to headquarters. And Dan Danford and Phil Blurton were not idle, for it was necessary to keep a close watch along the line in order to checkmate the emissaries of Purcell, who were constantly devising schemes to retard the work on the B. C. & G.

Picks, shovels and scrapers were stolen and carried away under cover of darkness, and once an attempt had been made to burn the bridge that was being constructed across Big Creek.

It was evident that Purcell had made up his mind to win in the fight by fair means or by foul.

"I can see very plainly," remarked Henry Blurton to Dan, one evening, as the two sat in the former's private office at Maverick City, "that Bennett Purcell is up to some of his old tricks He is going to make an ugly fight before this matter is ended, and we must be on the look out."

"We know what to expect from him," replied Dan, "and this man Aaron Dock is of the same stamp."

"You have wired Bart Bernard, the detective?" asked Blurton.

"I did so early this morning, and have just received this reply," responded Dan, drawing a slip of yellow paper from his pocket and handing it to Blurton, who opened it and read:

"Purcell left for west today. Is bringing 500 Italian and Bohemian laborers. I follow immediately. BERNARD."

A curious smile lighted the face of Dan,

"You see he is playing right into our hands," he remarked, quietly.

Blurton nodded.

"We must have everything in readiness to strike the blow when the time comes," he said.

"We have everything fixed. Dorsey has not left a stone unturned, and when we give the word I think we can put the D. & H. out of business in a single day."

The face of the youth was aglow with enthusiasm as he spoke.

A few minutes later an operator from the telegraph office that had been fitted up in an adjoining room, entered with a dispatch. It was dated at Sweet Violets and ran as follows:

"Trouble at Willow Springs station. 200 men gone over to the D. & H. Suspect plot to burn bridge timbers at Coyote creek. Will need good men tonight. DORSEY."

Mr. Blurton read the brief dispatch aloud and then glanced at Dan.

"I guess I'd better take a trusted man or two and run down to Sweet Violets at once," Dan suggested.

"And you may count me in," broke in Phil, who had entered while the dispatch from Dorsey was being read.

"Good!" ejaculated Dan. "We will be off at once."

A few minutes later Dan and Phil, accompanied by Pete Mayfield and Red Sellers, two trusted employees of Mr. Blurton's, galloped southward.

The shadows of night had already began to gather when the little party reached Sweet Violets.

Inside and about the big tent a crowd was collected, while the incessant clink of glasses came through the open flap, indicating a rushing business within.

A half mile to the south the gleam of many fires could be seen winking obscurely through the gathering gloom, where a big construction gang was encamped.

They found Jim Dorsey seated in his "office", eagerly awaiting their arrival.

The building, which has already been briefly described, was a box shanty 16 by 20, with a partition running across the center, dividing Jim's quarters from the office of the telegraph operator; for, though the grading had just been commenecd there, it had been found necessary to establish a temporary telegraph line along the route that far.

"Mighty glad to see you, boys," greeted Jim Dorsey as Dan and Phil and the two others entered his shack. "I guess we shall have a little business on hand tonight, and we'll need all the help we can get."

"We ought to cut the dust for Coyote bridge as soon as we can," suggested Pete.

"That's right," agreed Jim. "We shall probably have to be out all night, and we had better have a little refreshments before we go. Here, Pedro," he added, calling to the Mexican cook who was rustling with some pans in one corner, "trot out some coffee and the best grub you've got."

"Si, senor," grinned the Mexican, and in a few minutes he brought a pot of steaming coffee, some hot chili, and a quantity of cold meat and bread, which he placed on a rude, pine table.

"Now, boys, fall to and help yourselves,"

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Information How They May Give Birth to Happy, Healthy Children Absolutely Without Pain—Sent Free.

No woman need any longer dread the pains of childbirth; or remain childless. Dr. J. H. Dye has devoted his life to relieving the sorrows of women. He has proved that all pain at childbirth may be entirely banished, and he will gladly tell you how it may be done absolutely free of charge. Send your name and address to Dr. J. H. Dye, 202 Lewis Block, Buffalo, N. Y., and he will send you, postpaid, his wonderful book which tells how to give birth to happy, healthy children, absolutely without pain; also how to cure sterility. Do not delay but write today.

Might Try It.

Borely (at 11:30 p. m.)—Yes, my hair is getting quite thin. Is there anything you could advise me to put on it, Miss Smart?

Miss Smart (stifling a yawn)—You might put your hat on it, Mr. Borely.

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Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhœa, Displacements, Painful Periods, Uterine and Ovarian troubles. It cured me in one month. It is a simple, harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one having the recipe. I will send it free to every suffering sister who writes to me. Address Mrs. A. Hudnut South Bend, Indiana.

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invited Jim, "for we may have a hard night's work ahead of us."

The guests needed no second invitation, and while they ate and drank their coffee, plans for the night's work were discussed.

There was much danger of depredations being committed along the line where construction had been commenced, and it was decided that Jim and Dan should go directly to Coyote Creek, while Pete and Phil should keep a look out along the line to the north, and Red should go to Brush Creek.

It was quite dark when they left Sweet Violets.

Jim Dorsey and Dan galloped southward through the darkness, the rythmic sound of their mustangs' feet breaking through the silence of the night like the roll of a muffled drum.

There was no moon, and a thick rack overspreading the sky, hid the stars from view.

As they drew near Coyote Creek they reined in their horses to a more leisurely pace, and began to be on the alert for any one who might be lurking in the vicinity.

A quarter of a mile from the creek they came to a deep ravine in which flourished a dense growth of plum bushes.

"I guess we'd better leave our horses here," suggested Jim, "for we shall not find a better place to hide them, and then we shall not want them with us."

They dismounted and led the horses into the thicket, and having hitched them securely, they crept cautiously in the direction of the creek.

This thrilling and remarkable story will be continued in next week's Ledger, giving the reader chapters filled with dramatic situations of the very highest interest. To every one subscribing for the Ledger we are now sending, entirely without cost, one of our fine King Cameras, also any six of our selected and valuable patterns, as announced on pages thirteen and fifteen. Look at our advertisements of these splendid premiums and see if you do not wish them.

The White Slave.

(Continued from page eleven.)

thing, and I thought I'd try to do a little good."

"Then you have been flirting with me just to get me to that terrible place?"

"Exactly."

"You must be an awful bad man."

Ned was wonderfully interested, and he could see how the man shrunk back as the girl spoke.

"I am," he said simply, "but I'm going to try and behave myself after this."

The girl considered a moment, then said slowly:

"I've been a fool and you worse, but you have cured me and I'll not hate you because of that, but I'm going to get off."

"I'll take you home."

The girl shook her head. "No, thanks," she returned, "I can go there myself," and she signaled the car, and a moment later was on the pavement.

Ned saw the young man sink down in his seat with a strange, haunting expression in his eyes. He remembered the bits of conversation he had caught and suddenly formed a resolution. Crossing the aisle, he said quietly:

"Please move over."

The man looked up and did as requested.

"I could not help hearing what you were saying to that girl."

"Eh?"

"I heard you speak of her disappearing forever, and so I resolved to ask you exactly what you meant."

Ned's manner was so earnest that the other man could not take offense, although he asked coldly:

"And why?"

"Because," and Ned endeavored to steady his voice, "I have lost some one very dear to me. She just failed to come home one night."

"How long ago?"

"Three weeks. I have been very sick nearly all that time, but before I broke down I went to every one I could think of and no one knew anything about her."

The young man moistened his lips, as he asked huskily:

"What do you think about her?"

"I don't know what to think. We are engaged, I am crazy with anxiety."

"Do you know anything about the white slave trade?"

"No, what do you mean?"

"I'll tell you. The girl who just left me was marked for one of the victims, but I warned her, because I'm done with the dirty business."

"Business, how?"

The young man handed Ned a card, on which he read the name "Thomas Knight," and continued:

"I have been one of the procurers of a branch of the vice trust. Yes, a vice trust. My manhood has been roused, and if I starve in the streets, I'm out of it from now on," and Tom Knight shut his lips tight. "A strange thing that made me think, too. One of the men, the star, was given a case about a month ago, perhaps a little longer. He delivered the girl, and a sweeter one never lived. She was bought by a rich old cuss who was to take her abroad with him, but he died the night she was turned over to him and the girl was retained by the firm. She is dying they say with shame and terror. I saw that girl before she was 'delivered,' and I can't get her out of my head, poor little Rose!"

Ned shook from head to foot. "What makes you call her that?" he cried, grasping Tom's arm with an energy that hurt.

"Because it's her name. Rosy Gordon; heavens man, what's the matter?" but Ned was unconscious.

Tom did not wait, but, stopping the car, helped him into a drugstore, and after nearly a half hour a hastily summoned physician brought him back to life.

"You're too sick a man to be at large," he said to Ned, when he managed to drag himself to a sitting posture.

"Me? What do I matter? Quick. Tell me what you can about that girl. God, man, she's the one I am hunting for!"

The physician looked his disapproval, as Ned fell back once more unconscious, but a few words from Tom made him very sympathetic, and he administered a strong cordial, which once more brought Ned back to consciousness.

"Lie still for a little while and your friend will tell you what you want to know."

It was hard work for Tom to tell what he knew about the sad tragedy, but he did as well as he could, and when he was through, Ned stretched out his hands to the physician:

"Doctor," he almost wailed, "try and brace me up. I must get her away today," and the physician, interested beyond question, accompanied his patient, bolstering him on one side while Tom was on the other, for Ned was firm in his decision to go to Mrs. Bryant first.

The others recognized his good judgment when once in Mrs. Bryant's presence, for that lady, without stopping to hear more than the barest details, cried decidedly:

"Of course we can get her out. I'll put on my hat and go with you. Poor darling girl! I might have stopped it," and with wild remorse gnawing at her heart, she entered the carriage the physician had summoned, and the four were driven rapidly toward the house in which poor Rosy was made a white slave.

Next week's Ledger will contain the conclusion of this highly interesting story. We advise you to read it to the end. Do you take the Ledger regularly? You ought to do so, as it is acknowledged to be one of the most interesting papers printed in America. For a year's subscription we send fifty-two copies of the Ledger and six fine patterns free or one of our King Cameras. Note our premium advertisements on pages thirteen and fifteen.

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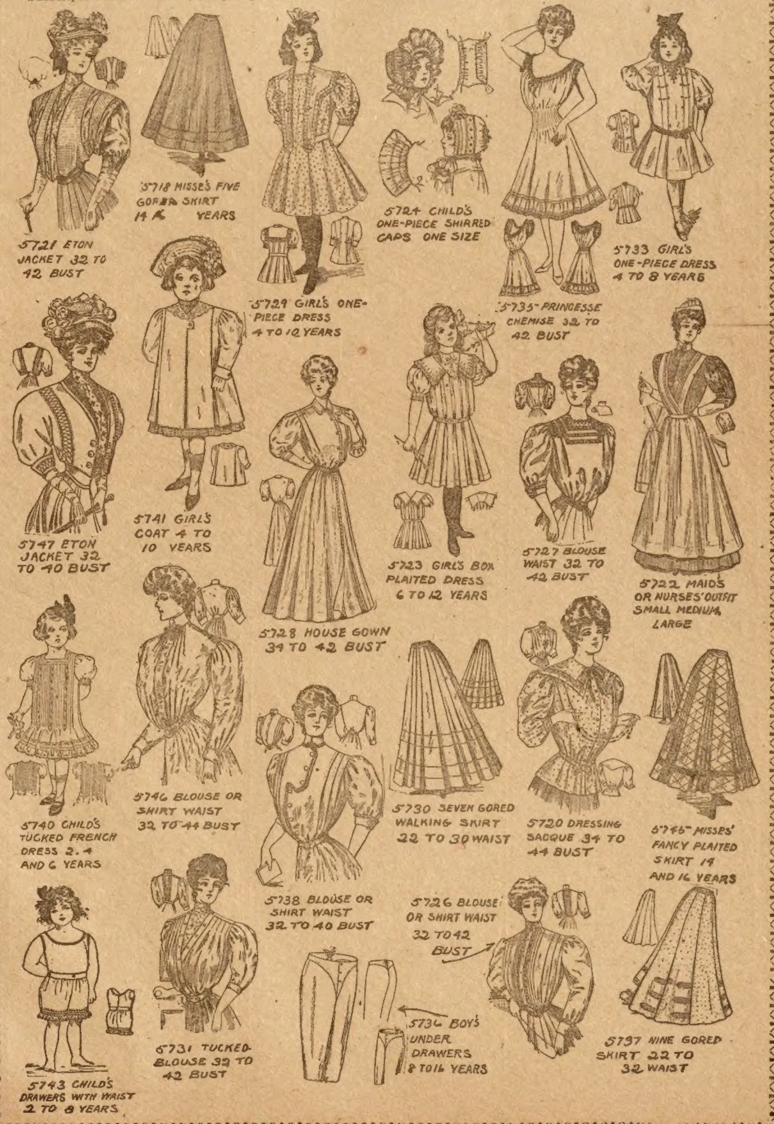
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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

HAPPY.

BY MARY LOUISE WARD.

My mamma—she calls me her little boy
blue,
Because I wear jumpers like all big
boys do;
They have lovely 'spenders—that go
'round my neck,
An' two great big pockets that hold 'most
a peck.

An' now I can crawl on the ground an'
play megs,
Because I'm all covered with dandy blue
legs,
An' mamma an' grandma an' auntie an'
Rose,
Are not always worryin' over my clothes.

A Robin's Adventure.

Until she was 6 years old Louise had lived in the city. Then her mother moved to a smaller town where the houses stood in large yards, and there were trees and flowers and plenty of grass. Louise had a little garden all her own, and in it she raised one tomato plant, one pea vine, two dandelions and a geranium. Think of that!

There were many other things about her new home that pleased little Louise. One was a swing with two chairs that faced each other, and here she and her sister used to sit and swing and play they were riding in the cars.

One day Louise was sitting in the swing alone, when a bird plumped down out of the apple tree right upon the crown of her hat. Louise was a bit startled, but her mother, who sat near in the hammock, called out, 'Don't be frightened, dear, it is just a baby robin! Keep still, and see what he will do."

So Louise kept still and the robin perched on her hat and looked about. Then he seemed to think that he would like to take a walk, for he got down off the crown of Louise's hat and hopped around the rim, until at last he tumbled off into the grass.

Pussy saw the bird fall, and started at once to creep slyly toward him, but Louise's mother saw her and scared her away, and picked the baby robin up and put him in the tree, where the old birds were making a great fuss. They seemed glad to get their baby back again.

Louise's mother says she doesn't like hats trimmed with dead birds, but if a little live bird wishes to trim a hat with himself, why, that is quite a different matter.—Mary Wood-Allen, in Little Folks.

A Plucky Girl.

Near Little Rock, Ark., a girl 13 years old, named Ellen Shooter, was left alone in the house while her mother went to town. After about an hour a tramp called at the house and demanded food. She gave him some, but as he had found out she was alone he determined to rob the house. The girl pushed him out and locked the door on him, but with a club he broke one of the windows and said he would come in and kill her.

The fellow was crawling in when the girl ran to the pantry and emptied the box of black pepper into her hand. His head and shoulders were in the room when she threw the pepper into his face. His eyes got their full share of it and his yells could have been heard a mile away.

He got back and rolled on the earth in his agony and by and by some men came along, who took him off to jail. It was four weeks before his eyes got over smarting and then the judge made him smart all over by sentencing him to six months in jail. It's all in knowing what to do and when to do it.

Johnnie's Story.

One time there was a young gote wich felt butty, an there was an old ram wich lay in the rode, half a sleep, a chune his cud. The gote he had been shet up in a paster all his life, and had never saw a ram, an he said to his sister, the gote did, "You jest stan still an see me wipe that freek off the face of the erth."

So the gote went up before the ram and stompt his feet and shuk his hed reel friteful, but the ram he didn't git up, but only jes kep a chune his cud and wotched out between his I lashes. Bime by the gote he backed off an took a run, an then arose up in the air an come down with his hed on the ram's hed, whack! The gote's hed was busted, but the ole ram he never wank his eye. Then the old ram he smiled with his mowth, and said to the buttygote's sister, "Pears to me, miss, that kangaroo of yourn is mitey careless where he lites; he come gum near makin' me swoller my cud.'

A Girl Marble Cutter.

Agatha Troy, a 16-year-old girl of Sicilian extraction at Utica, N. Y., assists her father in his business as granite and marble cutter. She is a small girl, less than 5 feet high, but she can wield a five-pound hammer as rapidly as any of the men in her father's shop.

A New Point of View.

Maggie, with her fair face and blond hair, and Nina, with dusky skin and kinky wool, had played together at mud pies and had swung on the same gate ever since they could remember, for Nina's mamma was Maggie's nurse, says the Housekeeper.

They were now 7 years old. Maggie loved Nina in spite of her color, yet she had a feeling that her friend deserved to be white, so she added to her prayer each night:

"Please, God, make Nina white!"

As the weeks went by and Nina remained unchanged, Maggie felt that her petition needed reinforcement, so she confided in Nina, begging her to pray for the greatly desired bleaching. But Nina, in surprise, looked at Maggie with wide-open eyes, and exclaimed:

"Me? No, sir'ee! Fo' de Lawd, Maggie, I doan wanter to be no white chile, an' Ise jes' prayin' with all my might fer you to come black!"

When Animals Weep.

Animals are said to weep from various causes. Grief at the loss of young ones and mates makes the dog, horse, elephant, rat, bear, deer, monkey, donkey, mule, cattle, camel and giraffe shed tears.

Sobbing has been proved in the parrot, though this may be mimicry. The stag at bay and the caged rat have been seen to weep, while monkeys have wept when pitied or from terror.

The elephant has wept at the loss of its liberty, and in some cases also from vexation. The dread of punishment has caused captive chimpanzees and other apes to weep.

Joy, pain, fatigue, thirst, ill-usage, sympathy, old age, approaching death and pettishness have all drawn tears from animals or at least driven them to a tearful state.

THE LAZY WORM.

A youthful worm lay sleeping fast
Within his cozy bed,
And, as the hour grew late at last
His mother came and said:
"Get up, my dear, it's very late,
And such a lovely day;
I hear a clock just striking 8;
Get up at once, I say!"

I fear the lazy little worm
Unto his mother said,
As he began to writhe and squirm,
And wriggle out of bed:
"I cannot rise till it is late,
Or else upon my word,
I know that it would be my fate
To meet that early bird!"

Knew the Other Animal.

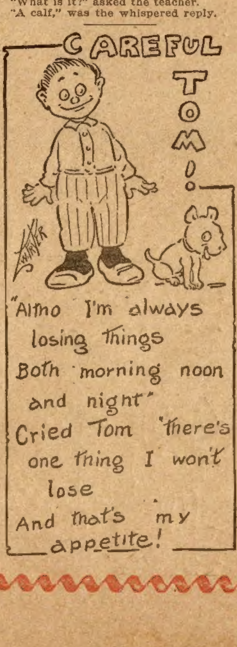
The class was discussing animals—how they walked, got up, etc. After she had explained the cow's methods of rising to her feet, the teacher asked:

"Do you know any other animal that gets up like the cow?"

Silence reigned for a moment; then one little girl raised her hand.

"What is it?" asked the teacher.

"A calf," was the whispered reply.

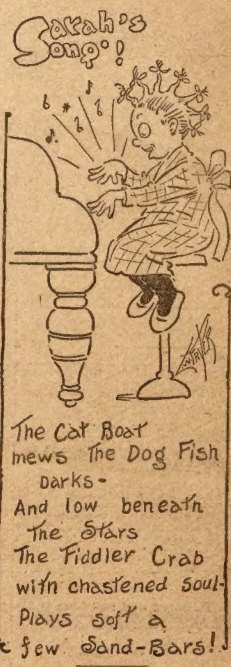

CAREFUL TOM!
"Altho I'm always losing things Both morning noon and night" Cried Tom "there's one thing I won't lose And that's my appetite!"

Moral Suasion.

Four-year-old Reginald and his elder brother were sent to stay with an aunt while their mother went South for her health, relates the Brooklyn Eagle. The aunt had decided ideas on the bringing up of children, one being a firm belief in gentleness rather than force as a moral agent. One day at dinner she expressed her views on this subject, declaring:

"Corporal punishment is a sin; children would never be so treated if I had my way. When a child of mine is naughty I simply use moral suasion, and always with the best results.'

Shortly after dinner Reginald approached his brother and asked, anxiously: "Say George, does moral suasion hurt very much?"


Sarah's Song!
The Cat Boat mews The Dog Fish barks-
And low beneath the Stars
The Fiddler Crab with chastened soul-
Plays soft a few Sand-Bars!

Asleep Inside of Flowers.

Have you ever wondered how the poor flies keep warm and dry on a wet summer's day, when the rain has been simply pelting down for hours, and you begin to feel that it's never, never going to be fine again.

Flies haven't got umbrellas and mackintoshes and houses and beds as we have, but they are rather wise insects in their choice of a shelter, and many of them choose the inside of flowers as beds.

The queer bladder-like flowers of the campion are one of the flies' favorite shelters.

Next time you are having a country ramble look out for this plant, and if you come across it, open some of the blossoms; very likely you will find that they are the home of several black flies that have crept into them for warmth and rest.

Good for Evil.

One Sunday a teacher was trying to illustrate to her small scholars the lesson, "Return good for evil." To make it practical she said:

"Suppose, children, one of your schoolmates should strike you, and the next day you should bring him an apple—that would be one way of returning good for evil."

To her dismay one of the little girls spoke up quickly:

"Then he would strike you again to get another apple!"

TEETER-TOTTER.

Teeter-totter in the air;
Up you go so high.
Then you come to earth again
With the merry cry:
"Teeter-totter,
Bread and water
Also cake and pie.
Teeter-totter,
Bread and water;
Go we to the sky!"

Its Proper Place.

"Have you ever seen a lion skin?" asked the stern school director of a little boy in the front row.

"Yes, sir," was the prompt response.

"Where?" questioned the director, much gratified at the boy's earnestness.

"On the lion," said the scholar.